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THE SELVA,

OR A COLLECTION OF

MATTER FOR SERMONS

AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR

ECCLESIASTICAL RETREATS

AND FOR

PRIVATE SPIRITUAL LECTURES,

BY ST. ALPHONSUS M. LIGUORI,

BISHOP OF ST. AGATHA, AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

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OBLIGATIONS

OF A PRIEST

CHARGED WITH THE CARE OF SOULS.

Life which a pastor of souls must lead in order to fulfil his obligations.—Preparation which Ecclesiastical Students should make, during their collegiate course, for the discharge of the pastoral duties.—Taken principally from the works of St. Alphonsus M. Liguori.

THE principal obligations of a parish priest are five. The first is residence; the second, the administration of the sacraments; the third, the celebration of Mass for the people; the fourth, correction; and the fifth is, to instruct the people in their duties and to preach the word of God.—n. 1.*

First, a parish priest is bound to residence in his parish. The generality of theologians teach that, according to the Council of Trent, he is obliged by the *divine law*, to reside at least morally within the limits of his parish, in order to feed his flock not only by the sacraments and the divine word, but also by his example. Several theologians hold that he is also bound to reside in a place where the people can have recourse to him without great inconvenience.—n. 1. 5. If he grievously violates the obligation of residence, he is guilty of a mortal sin, forfeits a portion of the fruits of his benefice, and is bound to give them either to the poor of the parish, or to employ them in the

* The references are to St. Liguori's "Treatise on the Duties of Pastors," which may be seen at the end of this volume.

repair of the parish church.—n. 1. The obligation of residence may be violated in two ways: first, by absence from the parish, and secondly, by a personal but useless residence. First, it is violated always by absence from the parish, unless when the cause of absence is a just one, and is approved by the bishop. There are four just causes which, with the approbation of the bishop, may excuse the absence of a pastor from his parish for some time. The first is, *Christian charity:* the second is, *urgent necessity;* the third is, *obedience* to the pope or bishop; the fourth is, *evident utility* of the Church or State. These are the just causes assigned by the Council of Trent for the absence of a pastor from his parish. But in order to avoid the violation of the obligation of residence, it is necessary not only that the pastor have a just cause for his absence, but also that the bishop approve of the cause and of the substitute whom the pastor leaves in his place.—n. 4. Though the cause of absence should be just, the pastor is guilty of a grievous sin, and forfeits a portion of the fruits of the parish, if he neglects to obtain the approbation of the bishop.—n. 1. 4. 8. In a synod held in Rome, under Benedict XIII, parish priests were forbidden to be absent from their parishes longer than two days, without the permission of the bishop or his vicar. Some theologians say that a pastor who has a just cause for his absence, but not approved by the bishop, and is not absent longer than a week, (provided he leaves a substitute,) is not guilty of a grievous violation of the obligation of residence by neglecting to procure the permission of the bishop. Many others hold that he does not commit a mortal sin unless his absence exceed a fortnight.—n. 4. A presumed leave of the bishop is not sufficient; an express permission is necessary, as has been declared by the Sacred Congregation. —n. 7.

Secondly, the obligation of residence is violated when the residence of the parish priest is useless, though personal. The pastor who resides in his parish but does not perform the pastoral duties, is guilty of a mortal sin, and forfeits the fruits of his benefice.

For the Council of Trent has declared, that pastors are obliged to reside in the parish, and are bound there to fulfil the duty imposed upon them. *Ubi injuncto sibi officio defungi teneantur.* Benedict XIV, in the Bull *Grave,* has declared that the obligation of residence is not fulfilled unless the residence of the pastor be formal, that is, accompanied with the fulfilment of his duties. And the Sacred Congregation has declared that a parish priest who for two months does not perform in person, the principal duties of a pastor, such as preaching the word of God and the administration of the sacraments, is not considered to have fulfilled the obligation of residence, though he has resided in the parish.—n. 2. The pastor is bound to perform, in person, the principal duties of his office, and cannot lawfully throw the whole burden of them on his curates.

The second duty of a parish priest is to administer the sacraments; and this duty he is bound to perform *in person.* "Parochi," says St. Alphonsus, "*per se ipsos* tenentur ad administrationem sacramentorum.—n. 11. With regard to the sacrament of penance, the parish priest is bound to administer it to his parishioners, not only when they are obliged to fulfil the precept of confession, or when they are in grievous necessity, but also as often as they come to confession through devotion, unless they come too often, or at an unseasonable time, or unless he is prevented by a just cause, and provides another confessor for them.—n. 11. St. Liguori thinks it probable that parish priests who refuse once or twice to hear one of their parishioners who asks for confession not through necessity but through devotion, are not guilty of a mortal sin, unless they refuse to hear the confession on the occasion of a jubilee or solemn festival, or on some similar occasion.—n. 11. Hence we may infer that, according to St. Liguori, a parish priest who refuses several times to hear the confession of even one of his parishioners who comes to confession even through devotion, is guilty of a mortal sin. Priests should not excuse themselves by saying that some of the people come too often to confession; they ought,

on the contrary, to labour with indefatigable zeal to exhort the people to the frequentation of the sacraments, and to prepare them by solid instructions on the duties of a Christian. Were the people once well instructed, but little time would be required for hearing their confessions. The saints have in every age recommended to all the faithful the frequentation of the sacraments. St. Charles Borromeo *commanded* all his parish priests to have all the children prepared to make their first communion at the age of ten.—n. 13. St. Liguori recommends all parents to send their children to confession at the age of seven, and to prepare them for their first communion at the age of ten.—Catech. lect., p. 161. He tells them to endeavour to make their children afterwards go to confession and communion once a week, or at least once a fortnight; and he exhorts all the laity to go to communion once every eight days, or at least twice in the month, *in order that they may be able to preserve themselves in the state of grace.*—Catech. lect., p. 258. St. Liguori appears to think that for most persons living in the midst of the dangers of the world, weekly communion is in a certain degree necessary as a means of preserving them in the grace of God, or from mortal sin. It is certain that a great number, and it may be said that the greater number of Christians shall not be able, by going to confession and communion once or twice in the year, to persevere in the state of grace, or without relapsing into mortal sin. Hence, for the greater number of Christians, it is necessary, as a remedy against a relapse into mortal sin, to go to confession more frequently than once or twice a year. Hence St. Alphonsus says that a husband is guilty of sin if he hinders his wife to go to confession several times in the year; *because*, adds the saint, *a person in the world can scarcely preserve herself in the grace of God by going to confession once a year.*—Catech. lect., p. 165. For many, weekly confession and communion are necessary as a remedy against falling into mortal sin; for others it may be sufficient to go to confession and communion once a month, but for all, or nearly all, it is necessary in order to avoid mortal sin, to go

to confession several times in the year. Now a pastor is certainly bound under pain of grievous sin, to provide according to the best of their ability, all his parishioners with the remedies necessary to preserve them from falling into mortal sin. Confessors, too, are bound under the penalty of mortal sin, to prescribe to each penitent the remedies necessary to preserve him from relapsing into grievous sin. Hence, in this country, where so many of the people go to confession only once or twice a year, it is the duty of confessors to examine whether any of their penitents stands in need of more frequent confession and communion, in order to persevere in the grace of God; and if they find that more frequent confession is necessary for any penitent as a remedy against falling into mortal sin, they are ordinarily bound to prescribe it; and if the penitent do not promise to adopt the remedy, he cannot be absolved. A pastor should bring strange confessors from time to time into his parish, lest some of the people should conceal sins in confession through shame. A pastor who is zealous for the instruction and sanctification of his people will also endeavour to procure a mission in his parish.

A parish priest is obliged to administer the holy Eucharist to the people as often as they reasonably demand it, and to give the viaticum to the dying.—n. 12. He is obliged to prepare the children for their communion at the age of ten, or at least at the age of fourteen.—n. 13. St. Charles Borromeo, in his Ninth Diocesan Synod, commanded all his parish priests to have all the children prepared for communion at the age of ten years. "Et quidam parochi," says St. Alphonsus, "postea difficiles se præbent ad communionem dandam pueris duodecim annos natis; sed cur? Ne sibi assumant onus eos instruendi. Proh! quot parochi hanc suam obligationem negligunt, quæ utique levis minime dicenda est."—n. 13. A pastor is bound under grievous sin to give Extreme Unction to those who ask for it: "Gravissime peccant (parochi)," says the Roman Catechism, "qui illud tempus ægrotos ungendi observare solent, cum omni

salutis ope amissâ, vitâ et sensibus carere incipiunt." —Part. 2, de Extr. Unct. n. 18.

The Roman Ritual says that the visitation of the sick is not the least important of the duties of a pastor; that when he hears of their illness he should visit them even before he is sent for, and that he should visit them frequently. The devil exerts all his power to secure the soul that is about to leave the world. "The devil." says St. John, "is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."—Apoc., xii. 12. The Council of Trent says that the enemy then makes the greatest efforts for the destruction of the dying Christian. When a Christian is about to depart from this world, his house is filled with devils, who unite in order to effect his ruin. "Their house shall be filled with serpents."—Isa., xiii. 24. Even the saints have been violently assaulted by the devils at the hour of death. St. Eleazar was violently tempted to bad thoughts in a dangerous illness. After his recovery he exclaimed, "Oh! how great is the power of the devil at death! In his agony, St. Andrew Avellino had so fierce a combat with hell that all the religious present were seized with trembling. His face became black, all his members trembled, and a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes. All, but particularly they who have lived in sin till their last illness, and still more particularly they who have contracted a habit of bad thoughts, are at death exposed to great temptations, and to the greatest danger of falling into sin, even after they have received the last sacraments. The dying have not strength to commit bad actions, but in a quarter of an hour they may entertain a thousand sinful thoughts. St. Liguori mentions several examples of persons who after having sincerely repented in their last illness, and after having devoutly received the last sacraments, were violently tempted by the devil, consented to bad thoughts and were lost. With what zeal, then, should the pastor labour to prepare the dying for their last struggle with hell, not only by giving them the last sacraments, but also by

teaching them the means by which they may victoriously repel every assault of the devils, and the acts by which they should prepare for death, particularly acts of contrition for all their past sins, acts of hope and charity, acts of resignation to the divine will, and of acceptation of their pains and of the stroke of death, and of unceasing petitions to God for the pardon of all their sins, for the gift of his love, and the gift of final perseverance, or the grace of a good death. The pastor ought to ask some one in the house to read occasionally for the dying, the acts preparatory to death. He should also be careful to repeat his visit to the sick after having administered the last sacraments to them. A dying Christian, after receiving the Extreme Unction, may, and (if he had been in the habit of sin, particularly of bad thoughts,) probably will, fall back into mortal sin, and be lost, unless the pastor return to absolve him. How, then, shall the pastor or his curate be able to account at the tribunal of God for those who, after receiving the last sacraments, relapse into mortal sin and are lost, because the assisting priest did not return to comfort, to strengthen, and also to absolve them. If, at his return, he finds the dying man deprived of his senses, the confessor should give him conditional absolution. St. Liguori says that to the dying who have lost their senses, conditional absolution may be given every three or four hours, and more frequently if they are very near death, or if they had been in the habit of bad thoughts.—n. 269. *Praxis Confessarii.* The Viaticum may and ought to be given several times in the same illness. "Episcopus," says Benedict XIV, "insinuet parochis posse et debere viaticum iterum ac tertio administrari, præsertim si ægrotus exposcit; ac si velit, pœnam decernat in parochos, qui ægrotis devote postulantibus iterum et tertio eucharistiam deferre detrectent falsis prætextibus."—De syn., lib. 7, c. 12, n. 5. Every priest who has to attend the dying should read attentively the chapter *De assistentia erga moribundos,* in the Praxis Confessarii of St. Liguori.

The third obligation of a pastor of souls is to pray

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The third obligation of a pastor of souls is to pray

and to celebrate Mass for the people. He is obliged not only to say Mass, that the faithful may comply with the obligation of assisting at it, but he is also bound, no matter how poor the benefice may be, to offer the holy sacrifice for the people on all Sundays and holidays, as Benedict XIV, has expressly declared.—(Bull. Cum Semper, 1744.) n. 16.

The fourth obligation of a pastor is the duty of correction. According to the common opinion of theologians, a parish priest is bound, even at the risk of his life, provided there be hope of amendment, to correct his parishioners who are in the state of mortal sin, or in the proximate danger of falling into mortal sin, not only when they are in extreme necessity, but also when they are in grievous necessity.—n. 17. To this duty the pastor is bound in justice. In his Second Pastoral (paragraph 16,) St. Alphonsus reminds the parish priests of his diocess that if they neglect the duty of correction, they are bound to restore a portion of the fruits of the parish. A pastor is sometimes bound to correct sinners even when he knows that the correction will be unprofitable. "Although," says St. Alphonsus, "generally speaking there is not a strict obligation of applying correction unless there be hope of amendment, still a parish priest ought not to abstain from correcting obstinate sinners, and should repeat the correction from time to time, at least when there is not danger that it will be productive of any grievous evil to himself. The correction will, at least, prevent the people from losing their respect for the pastor, and from thinking that he sleeps while the scandal continues. It will also teach others that they will not be allowed to rot in sin without being reproved for their conduct."—n. 18. When there are great abuses which cannot be corrected by any other means, the pastor is bound to procure a mission for the parish.—n. 18. "The parish priest," says St. Alphonsus, "who dislikes the mission, gives reason to suspect his own conduct. Good pastors do not omit to procure a mission for their parish at least every four or five years."—n. 18. A parish priest is obliged not only to correct the abuses

which exists, but also to prevent future scandals. Hence he should prevent the sins which arise from courtships, and should forbid young men to go to the house of the female to whom they are betrothed or soon to be married.—n. 19. All intercourse between such persons will be the cause of numberless sins of thought, and often of sinful acts. The pastor should also, according to the best of his ability, endeavour to prevent the sins which are committed in consequence of persons of a different sex sleeping in the same bed, or in the same room. He ought to watch over the conduct of those in his parish who are preparing for the ecclesiastical state; and should they neglect the frequentation of the sacraments, or give bad example, or associate with bad company, it is his duty to make known their misconduct to the bishop; otherwise he must render an account to God for the sins caused by the ordination of unworthy persons, whose ordination he should have prevented.—n. 20. He is bound not only to correct all whom he knows to be in mortal sin, or in the proximate danger of it, but he is also, according to the common opinion of theologians, obliged to inquire diligently through his parish, in order to ascertain who are in the state of proximate danger of sin.—n. 21. Hence he should visit all the houses in his parish and inquire whether the people know the duties of a Christian, how they conduct themselves, and to what dangers they are exposed. Parish priests are commanded by Benedict XIV not to assist at the marriage of those who present themselves to be married, without first ascertaining that the parties are acquainted with the Christian rudiments and duties which all are bound to know. (S. Liguori, Pastoral 2, par. 2.) If pastors attended to this command of the pontiff, how few of our people would be in gross ignorance of what all Christians are bound under pain of mortal sin to learn. To prevent persons who were ignorant of their duties, from being married, St. Alphonsus made it an invariable rule of his court that no marriage license should ever be given to persons who had not a written testimony of the parish priest that they had

a competent knowledge of the duties of a Christian.—Pastoral 2, paragraph 2.

The pastor is bound not only to correct and prevent evil, but also to promote virtue in his parish. Hence he should constantly exhort the people to the frequentation of the sacraments, to the practice of prayer, and other works of piety, and should establish in his parish some of those pious sodalities, the members of which frequent the sacraments, and perform several devout exercises even on week-days. Since according to theologians, mental prayer is morally necessary for all the faithful, (Selva, Instr. 5, n. 1.) Miscellaneous works of St. Alphonsus, (vol. 2, p. 7.) the pastor should instruct the people in the method of making it, and exhort them to the practice of it. He should recommend the heads of families to have common mental prayer every morning, and should teach all the people to practise it, at least by reflecting at their work, or in going to it, or in returning from it, on some maxim of eternity; and by making acts of divine love, of oblation of themselves to God, of sorrow for their sins, &c.; along with fervent petitions for the pardon of all their sins, for the gift of the love of God, and for the grace of final perseverance. If he has not established the practice of saying the Rosary publicly in the Church, he should recommend all the heads of families to say it along with the family every evening. He should exhort the people either to visit the blessed sacrament and an image of most holy Mary in the church, or at least to make in their own houses the acts that are ordinarily made in these visits. In Catholic countries the people assemble in the morning before their work to hear Mass and to make meditation in common during Mass; and in the evening, after the labour of the day, they come again to the church to visit the blessed sacrament and an image of the Blessed Virgin. The acts to be made at these visits are read aloud for the people by the pastor, or by some one appointed by him. The pastor should also recommend to the people the charitable devotion of praying for the souls in purgatory, and for those that are in their last agony. These along

with the devout exercises to be performed by young females on Sundays and holidays in the church, are the principal practices which St. Alphonsus recommends the missionaries to establish in the parish before the conclusion of the mission, in order to preserve the people in the grace of God, and to perpetuate the fruits of the mission. These practices, he says, are to be afterwards maintained by the zeal and co-operation of the pastors.

The devout exercises for the young girls are performed in this manner: The Rosary is said and concluded with a pious hymn; then the priest gives them a short instruction on the duties they have to perform during the week; how they are to make mental prayer, to prepare for communion, and to make their thanksgiving after it; what acts they are to perform in the visit to the blessed sacrament; how they are to hear Mass, and also how they should frequently raise their heart to God during their work or other occupations. He also teaches them how to practise mortification, humility, patience, and, above all, prayer, by saying their morning and night prayers, and particularly by praying for help and frequently invoking the names of Jesus and Mary in all temptations. After this little instruction, they say the Little Crown of the Dolours of the Blessed Virgin. The priests then proposes to them a short meditation, or little discourse on sin, or death, judgment, hell, heaven, eternity, or on the passion of Jesus Christ. After this are made the visits to the blessed sacrament and to an image of most holy Mary. They then return home. The priest appoints two of the more grown girls who must be careful to come first to the exercises, in order to begin the Rosary at the proper time, and to mark those who are absent, and inform their mothers of their absence. The priest appoints two others to watch over the conduct of the rest, and make known to him their defects, that he may correct them.—Selva, 3rd part, &c.

The fifth duty of a pastor is to instruct the people in what they are bound to know, and to preach to them the divine word.—n. 22. He is obliged to teach

the people to know and believe the mysteries of faith, and the duties of religion, the knowledge and belief of which are necessary for salvation. He is bound to instruct them, first, in the four principal mysteries, viz., that their is but one God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, who is infinitely powerful, wise, merciful, and amiable; that he is a remunerator of vice and virtue; that in this one God, there are three distinct persons, and that the Son of God, the second person of the most holy Trinity, became man and died for our redemption. Secondly, the pastor is bound to instruct the people in what they should know regarding the sacraments of baptism, penance, eucharist, and also the other sacraments when they are to receive them, and also in the dispositions necessary for receiving them worthly. Thirdly, he must teach them the articles of the Apostles' Creed, particularly the virginity of most holy Mary, the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, where his glory is equal to that of the Father; the resurrection of the body at the last judgment, when Jesus Christ will come to judge the world; the unity of the Church of Rome, in which alone salvation can be found, and the eternity of heaven and hell. Every Christian is obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to know all these articles. Fourthly, the pastor is bound to teach his people the ten commandments of God, and the commandments of the Church. Fifthly, the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition.—n. 22. Now as a Christian who neglects to learn these things, (not only in name but also in substance,) sins grievously, so is the parish priests, according to the common opinion of theologians, guilty of mortal sin, if he neglects to teach them to his people either by his own instructions or by other qualified persons, when he himself (as the Council of Trent says, sess. 5, c. 2.) is prevented by a just cause.—n. 22. In order to teach these things to his people, the pastor should not only have classes of catechism taught on Sundays and holidays by the members of the Christian Doctrine Society, or others, but should himself, before the people leave the chapel, give a

practical instruction on some of the commandments, or sacraments, &c., in which he will not only explain the commandment, sacrament, or mystery, in language intelligible to all, even to the children, but also confirm his doctrine by arguments and examples calculated to move his hearers to practise the lessons which he proposes to them. The instructions should be given in order; so that in the course of every six months the pastor, or his curate, may explain the articles of the Creed, the commandments of God and of the Church, the sacraments, the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, &c. Secondly, he must oblige the parents to send their children to the catechism, and must refuse absolution to the parents who neglect to send them. In his Third Pastoral, (paragraph 3,) St. Liguori strictly forbids the confessors of his diocess to absolve fathers or mothers who neglect to send their children to the catechism, and reminds the confessors, that in his diocess such neglect is a reserved sin. Thirdly, he must have a parish library of pious works, and of books of instruction on the duties of a Christian. The Catechetical Lectures of St. Alphonsus on the Decalogue and Sacraments, which have been just published, contain ample instructions for the people on all that they are obliged to know regarding the commandments and sacraments. These books should be lent through the parish; and in every village and townsland, particularly in those that are at a distance from the parish chapel, the pastor should appoint members of the Christian Doctrine Society, or other pious persons, to read on Sundays and holidays the catechism, and an explanation of the Creed, sacraments, and commandments, for the children, and the poor who are unable to read or to procure a book of instruction. Fourthly, he must endeavour to provide, according to the best of his ability, for all who are unable to come to the catechism, either because they are at a great distance from the chapel, or because they are at service, or obliged to remain at home for the purpose of taking care of the house, or of cattle, &c. With regard to all such persons who are in grievous spiritual necessity, the pastor (however

inconvenient it may be to him,) ought according to La Croix, to go privately to them, and to instruct them in their duties: *Cum quantocunque suo incommodo.* And St. Liguori adds, "I say that if the number of such uninstructed persons be so great that the pastor could scarcely go to all of them, he should at least examine and instruct them at the time of the Easter duty, and when they come to be married." In his Sixteenth Pastoral (paragraph 1,) the saint says that "when any of the parishioners does not come to the church, the parish priest is (as the theologian say,) bound to go in search of him, and to instruct him." In going through his parish to ascertain who among his parishioners are in the state or proximate danger of mortal sin, the pastor should inquire after those who are ignorant of their religious duties, and should, according to the best of his ability, devise and adopt the means of teaching every member of his flock, all the doctrines and duties which they are bound under pain of mortal sin to learn. If pastors adopted the means abovementioned, our people should not be so ignorant of their duties. But in many parishes in which the catechism is taught, neither the parish priest nor his curate gives a catechetical instruction to the people. In many other parishes the priest gives an explanation of a chapter in the catechism, but because he neglects to study or prepare for it, the instruction is without order, the moral lessons contained in it are not confirmed by solid arguments or by examples calculated to convince the understanding and to move the will to practise what is taught. Some prepare the catechetical lectures, but do not give a connected series of instructions on all doctrines and duties which the faithful are bound to know. For example, instead of continuing the exposition of the commandments until they have explained them all, they interrupt the instructions on the commandments, and begin to lecture on the sacraments; and before they have finished the explanation of the sacraments, they return to the commandments: thus the people are not well instructed in either. Some give their instructions in a style

unintelligible to the children and to the poor, and thus weary and disgust their hearers. Such catechists violate the precept of the Council of Trent, which has commanded pastors to explain the truths of religion in language accommodated to the capacity of the people: they are traitors to Jesus Christ and persecutors of his Church. Finally some give an excellent and connected series of catechetical instruction to the children and people on Sundays and holidays, but afterwards neglect to provide instruction for those who are not able to come to the chapel. Hence there are but few parishes in which there is not a considerable number of the people ignorant of their religious duties. In order to remedy this and other evils, every pastor should endeavour occasionally to procure for his parish a mission, in which three or four learned, zealous, and experienced priests would, for five or six weeks, endeavour to rouse the people from the lethargy of sin, by a regular course of sermons composed in a popular, unadorned, apostolic style, intelligible to the meanest capacity, would deliver a connected series of instructions on the duties of a Christian, in plain and simple language, which the most illiterate could understand; would give a series of pious exercises for the people which would draw down millions of graces on the parish; would hear the confessions of all the parishioners, and would absolve no one whom they could suspect of ignorance without examining and instructing him on the duties and doctrines which he is obliged to know. Behold the fruits of a mission: the parish sanctified, ignorance and vice banished, the seeds of piety sown in the hearts of the people, and the foundation of lasting virtue laid. (See St. Liguori's Letters on the advantages of the Missions.) If the pastor and his curates labour with zeal to perpetuate the fruits of the mission by the faithful discharge of the pastoral duties, virtue and piety shall flourish for ever in the parish.

The pastor is obliged not only to instruct the people in their duties as Christians, but also to preach to them the divine word on Sundays and holidays. According to the common opinion of theologians, a

pastor who neglects for an entire month without interruption, or for three discontinuous months in the course of the year, to preach the word of God to his flock, is guilty of a mortal sin.—n. 23. In order to fulfil this obligation, the parish priest must preach to the people on subjects which are calculated to make them avoid vice and practise virtue; and in language accommodated to their capacity. If he preaches on speculative matters, or in a style unintelligible to the people, he does not fulfil his obligation. For the words of the Council of Trent are: "Ut plebes sibi commissas pro earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo necessaria ad salutem, annunciandoque cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vita quæ eos declinare, et virtutes quas sectari oporteat."—Sess. 5, c. 2, de ref. For the subjects on which the pastor should commonly preach, the reader is referred to St. Liguori's letter on preaching, and to the chapter on the obligations of pastors, at the end of this volume.—n. 24, &c. Such the principal duties of a priest charged with the care of souls. Besides these obligations, the pastor is bound to show good example; he must be "*a burning and shining light.*"—John, v. 35. Burning with interior zeal, and shining with the lustre of good example.—n. 32. He may preach and exhort, but unless he gives examples of virtue, the people will believe what he does rather than what he preaches. "Magis oculis quam auribus credunt."—Conc. Urcellense. Tract. 3, de Officio Cler. Does he give good example to his flock who keeps in a sordid and filthy state the altar, the holy table from which the pastor and the people are to eat the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ? Does he not on the contrary, by such want of respect for the body of Jesus Christ, destroy the veneration of the people for the sacred mysteries? Does he give good example, who, in the presence of the people, retires from the chapel without making almost any thanksgiving after Mass? Does the pastor give good example who, while he exhorts masters to watch over their servants, neglects the care of his own? neglects to have night and morning prayer for them, and to

oblige them to frequent the sacraments? Secondly, the pastor is obliged to employ the superfluous revenues of the parish in relieving the poor.—n. 32. Thirdly, he is obliged carefully to examine midwives whether in cases of necessity they do what is necessary for the valid administration of baptism.—n. 32. For many cases may occur in which they must baptize infants, and therefore they are obliged under pain of mortal sin to know what is necessary for the validity of the sacrament of baptism. Fourthly, the pastor ought, according to the Roman Ritual, to register in a book kept for the purpose, the names of those whom he baptizes, of their parents, and sponsors: he ought to admonish the sponsors of the spiritual relationship, and of the other obligations which they have contracted.—n. 32. "On good pastors," says St. Alphonsus, "depends the sanctification and salvation of the people. In the district which is governed by a good pastor, devotion, frequentation of the sacraments, mental prayer, and good example shall flourish; but if the pastor neglect his duties, and scandalize the flock, the parish shall be full of vices and scandals."—n. 33.

How shall a pastor or his curate be able to discharge all these difficult obligations? Only by a life of incessant labour, of constant study, of unceasing prayer, and of retirement from the world, from worldly society, from worldly business, and from worldly amusements. The pastor must lead a life of great labour: first, in the administration of the sacraments; secondly, in looking after and relieving the spiritual and temporal wants of his people; thirdly, in instructing his flock and preaching the word of God. First, the administration of the sacraments, particularly of the sacrament of penance, requires incessant exertions on the part of the pastor, and of all his curates. He is strictly bound continually to exhort the faithful to frequent confession and communion. In the Catechism of the Council of Trent (page 241, English translation, by Rev. J. Donovan,) we read: "Let not the faithful imagine that it is enough to receive the body of the Lord once a year

only; they should approach oftener: but whether monthly, weekly, or daily, cannot be decided by any fixed universal rule. St. Augustine, however, lays down a most certain rule, applicable to all: '*Live*,' says he, '*in such a manner as to be able to receive every day*.' It will therefore be the duty of the pastor frequently to admonish the faithful, that as they deem it necessary to afford daily nutriment to the body, they should also feel solicitous to feed and nourish the soul every day with this heavenly food." The pastor, then, is obliged, according to the Catechism of the Council of Trent, to exhort the people even to daily communion: it speaks of monthly communion as the least frequent. If, then, the pastor is bound to exhort the people even to daily communion, and if he is also bound to hear his parishioners when they come to confession even through devotion, surely it will not be too much to say that he is strictly obliged to exhort his people at least to monthly communion, and to give them an opportunity of going to confession at least once a month. Now, there is scarcely a parish in this country in which, if all the adults went to confession once a month, both the pastor and his curate should not be obliged to hear about twenty-five confessions every day throughout the entire year. The number of adults in parishes in which there is a curate, is certainly not less than one thousand five hundred: it is generally more. In order to hear the confessions of one thousand five hundred persons once a month, two priests should each hear about twenty-five confessions in the day. Many of these confessions will require on the part of the confessor a considerable time, great charity, great patience, and great labour. Many of them will be the confessions of persons in the habit of sin, and in gross ignorance of their duties. Those whom he suspects to be in ignorance of what they are bound to know, he is strictly obliged to examine; first, with regard to their sins, in order to provide for the integrity of the confession, and secondly, what the duties and doctrines are, of which they are ignorant. He is bound then to dispose them for absolution; and before he absolves them, to in-

struct them in the things which they are bound under pain of mortal sin to learn. When the pastor and his curate have fulfilled the obligation of hearing the confessions of the people, and of administering the other sacraments, the obligation of preaching and instructing the people on Sundays and holidays, of preparing the children for their first communion, of preparing the dying for eternity, of seeking through the parish after sinners to convert them, after abuses to correct them, after the ignorant to instruct them. after the miserable to provide for their necessities, they shall find but little time for ease or self-indulgence. Their whole life must be a life of labour, The pastor may say, my curates do all the duties for me. No: such an excuse cannot be admitted. First, because a parish priest is bound to perform in person the principal duties of a pastor, that is, preaching and the administration of the sacraments; and, according to St. Liguori, a parish priest is guilty of a mortal sin if without just cause he gets all the pastoral duties done by others, even though they should be well performed. Secondly, on account of the great number of souls compared with the number of priests, there is scarcely a parish in Ireland in which the curates without the aid of the parish priest are able to perform the pastoral duties which have been already explained. Even with his aid, however great the exertions of the curates may be, some poor souls shall be left without the assistance which they stand in need of. The pastor must also lead a life of study. First, in order to fulfil the obligation of instructing the people, and of preaching the divine word in a manner calculated to teach the faithful their duties, and to make them avoid vice and practice virtue. In order to attain these ends by his instruction and preaching, he must carefully prepare his catechetical lectures and sermons. Hence he must devote a considerable time each week to study. Secondly, he must study in order to qualify himself for hearing the confessions not of one class of penitents, but of persons in all the different states in the parish over which he is placed. He cannot hear the confessions of some,

and refuse to hear the confessions of others among his parishioners: he is bound to hear all. Hence he is obliged to have a competent knowledge of all the obligations of all the different states of life in the parish. If through ignorance of the duties of one of his parishioners, he leads him astray and sends him to hell, he must answer life for life, and soul for soul at the judgment seat of God. Yes: the pastor must be acquainted with the obligations of all the different trades, professions, offices, and states in the parish, the obligations of the rich to the poor, of the poor to the rich, of masters to servants, of servants to masters, of parents to children, of children to parents, of husband and wife; in a word, he must have a knowledge of the whole course of moral theology. In order to acquire and retain a knowledge of so extensive a science, he must lead a life of continual study. He must also lead a life of constant prayer. First, because he is an intercessor between God and his people, and is therefore bound to pray for them frequently. Hence every pastor should endeavour to offer the holy Mass every day, and to remember his people before God on the altar. Secondly, in order to draw down the divine benediction on his own labours. Thirdly, and above all, because without unceasing prayer it will be utterly impossible for him to fulfil the pastoral duties. St. Augustine teaches that God does not, ordinarily, give even to the saints grace to do what is difficult, or to resist difficult temptations, unless they pray for it. Now, the whole life of pastors of souls, and of curates who are obliged in this country to perform the pastoral duties, is from the commencement of their mission till death, an uninterrupted series of duties, all of which are exceedingly difficult—all of which bind under pain of mortal sin, and all of which they have from self-love, self-ease, from the devil, and from the world, the strongest temptations to neglect. They are strongly and incessantly tempted not to submit to the labour necessary for the administration of the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of penance; not to submit to the retirement and solitude and restraint necessary

for study and for prayer, but to indulge themselves in worldly society and amusement. If, then, the pastor or his curate do not send up to God a series of petitions corresponding to this series of difficult duties and violent temptations, God will not give him the grace to fulfil the duties or to resist the temptations. Hence he will inevitably violate his obligations, and probably live and die in the state of sin, the enemy of God, and at the same time, the mediator of his people. The pastor must lead a life of retirement from worldly society, worldly business, and worldly amusements. First, because, as is evident from the nature and multitude of the pastoral obligations, and the immense number of souls in all the parishes of this country, the pastor has no time for the world, or for the things of the world: all his time is too little for the sanctification of his flock. Secondly, because worldly society, worldly traffic and worldly amusements, dissipate the heart and destroy in the soul the spirit of study and prayer, without which it is utterly impossible for the pastor to save his own soul or the souls of his flock. The life, then, of a pastor must be a life of great labour, of continual study, of unceasing prayer, and of retirement from the world. He has no time for sloth or self-indulgence: his whole life must be given to the people. This may appear hard, but whoever undertakes an office must submit to its difficulties and hardships. The good pastor gives his life for his sheep. Every pastor is obliged when necessary, to risk and even lay down his life for the salvation of the souls committed to his care; and because, in this country, where the parishes are so extensive and populous, his entire life is too little for the salvation of the flock, the pastor must devote his whole life to the sanctification of his people, or he must be damned. Since the obligations of a pastor are so difficult, he must be a man of strong and perfect virtue, and therefore must adopt the means of acquiring perfection, which shall be hereafter explained, and persevere till death in the adoption of them.

In his rule of life for secular priests, St. Alphonsus

recommends the following spiritual exercises. First, after rising in the morning, to make acts of thanksgiving, of love, of oblation, of all that they shall do and suffer during the day. Secondly, to make two meditations, each of half an hour, one in the morning, and the other in the evening, on the eternal maxims, or on the passion of Jesus Christ: the meditation on the latter subject is more appropriate than any other for a priest before celebrating mass, in which, he renews on the altar, the remembrance of the death of the Redeemer by the oblation of the same victim, and the same sacrifice. In their meditations, he tells them to exercise themselves in acts of love, and sorrow; and still more frequently in petitions for perseverance in the grace and love of God. Before mass, he tells them to make, in addition to the half-hour's meditation, another short preparation, and in that preparation to make, at least, three acts, viz.:— of love, of sorrow, and of desire to be united with Jesus Christ. After mass, he recommends them to make a thanksgiving of an hour, or at least half-an-hour, unless called away by some pressing business. In the *Selva*, he says, that the thanksgiving should be always, at least, a quarter. He recommends them to spend the time of thanksgiving in acts of love and oblation, and in petitions for God's graces. He recommends them to practice temperance in eating, and particularly in the use of wine, in which excess is dangerous to chastity. He recommends them to perform some particular mortification in honour of the Blessed Virgin, on Saturday, and in all the Novenas of her Festivals. He also recommends them to perform some particular mortification on Fridays or Wednesdays. He recommends them to make a spiritual lecture of half-an-hour every day; and a visit to the blessed sacrament, and to some image of the Blessed Virgin. "Many seculars," says the Saint, "are punctual in making a visit, every day, to the holy sacrament, and do not omit it on account of business, or in order to avoid any inconvenience. But the number of secular priests who make a daily visit to the blessed sacrament, is small, nay, very small. It

must be said that Jesus Christ meets with very bad treatment from priests. All arises from their little love of Jesus Christ." He recommends secular priests to say the Rosary every evening, and, except the time necessary for repose and relaxation, in which he tells priests to avoid the conversation of worldlings, he recommends the rest of the day to be employed in hearing confessions, or in the study of moral theology, or in preparing sermons and instructions for the people. He recommends secular priests to go to confession once or twice a week; and to make a day's retreat once a month, spending the entire day in meditations, spiritual lectures, visits to the blessed sacrament, and other spiritual exercises. He recommends them to avoid banquets and parties of pleasure, particularly where females are present.

In this country, almost all ecclesiastical students are intended for the secular mission. They are first to be curates, and afterwards pastors of souls. Hence, since curates, in this country, are obliged to perform under the direction of the parish priest, all the duties of a pastor, except that of offering mass for the flock, all ecclesiastical students should labour with zeal and fervour during their collegiate course, to acquire the learning, virtues, and all the qualifications necessary for the discharge of the pastoral obligations. They should keep, always, before their minds, that they are preparing for one of the most dangerous states in the Church of God. Yes, the state of a pastor in this country, where the number of souls in each parish is so great compared with the number of priests, is one of the most dangerous states in the Church of Christ. He must live in the midst of a wicked world—he must know and hear all its vices and corruption; and at the same time that he is exposed to all its dangers, he is bound by all the obligations of the priesthood, and by the far more difficult and awful, and never-ending obligations of the pastor of souls. How many pastors in this country, when retiring to rest, can say to themselves without fear and trembling: is there in my parish, through my fault, through my want of zeal, or labour, or study,

or prayer, any soul ignorant of what every Christian is bound to know; is there any soul in the state of mortal sin, or in the proximate danger of it? Alas! alas! how small the number of parishes in which there are not many souls in gross ignorance of the duties of a Christian, and in the state of mortal sin! Is this to be ascribed to the neglect of the pastor, or of his curate. The just Judge alone can tell. It is not enough, then, for ecclesiastical students to have the virtues and qualifications necessary for the priesthood, they must also possess the virtues and qualifications necessary for the pastoral office. Hence, in examining their vocation, it will not be enough for our ecclesiastics to inquire into the marks of a vocation to the priesthood; that is, a pure intention, sanctity of life, and the necessary talents and learning: it will be, moreover, necessary to see whether they have the virtues and qualifications which will give them just reason to hope that they will persevere till death, amid the dangers and vices of the world, in the faithful discharge of the pastoral duties. They must examine whether they have the charity and zeal, the learning and prudence, the spirit of labour and study, and prayer, necessary to enable them to fulfil the awful obligation by which they shall be bound under pain of mortal sin, to hear the confessions of all the adults of the parish in which they shall be placed: whether they have the charity necessary to enable them to receive with kindness all who approach the tribunal of penance, the poor, the illiterate, and the vicious: whether they have the charity and zeal necessary to bear the tediousness and annoyance caused by the stupidity, ignorance, insensibility, and obstinacy of many of the people: whether they have the patience and spirit of labour necessary to examine and instruct all those who may be suspected of ignorance and of inability to examine their consciences, or to confess their sins; and to dispose them for absolution by fervent exhortations; whether they have the learning and patience necessary to discover the causes and remedies of the spiritual maladies of sinners, and to prescribe the means by which they may be healed: whether they have the

learning necessary to direct, and point out their obligations to all classes of penitents, in all the different professions and states of life: whether they have the spirit of study necessary to preserve and improve, till death, their knowledge of the sacred sciences: whether they have the spirit of labour necessary to encounter the overwhelming fatigue of hearing such an immense number of long, wearisome, and embarrassing confessions: whether they have the spirit of prayer, which will enable them to turn to God for help, in the numberless difficulties, perplexities, and dangers attendant on hearing such confessions; and in the numberless temptations by which the devil, and their own sloth and self-love impel confessors to seek excuses for refusing to hear certain penitents, or for putting them off to another time, or for abridging, or hurrying over their confessions, or for neglecting to examine and instruct the ignorant, and to excite sinners to sorrow, or for discouraging, or at least, not encouraging frequent confession and communion among the people—(Chap. 1. praxis Conf.): whether they have the spirit of detachment from the world, which will make them despise its goods and its pleasures, and which will enable them to lead, in the midst of the world, a life of solitude and retirement, in the fulfilment of the pastoral duties, in sacred study and prayer: whether, in fine, they have the spirit of zeal which will make them devote their whole lives to the advancement of the divine glory, and the salvation of souls. Before he receives holy orders, every ecclesiastic, in this country, should examine whether he hast just reason to believe that he will have acquired these qualifications before the arrival of the day of his ordination.

How is an ecclesiastic to acquire all these qualifications? First, by adopting the means of attaining christian perfection, which are abundantly supplied in all well-regulated ecclesiastical seminaries. Secondly, by the exact observance of the rules, and by the faithful and fervent discharge of the duties of the college in which he lives, through a motive of pleasing God, and preparing himself for the discharge of

the pastoral duties. Thirdly, by labouring to acquire the practice of the holy exercise of the presence of God, and the particular devotions which every priest and pastor should practise till death. First, he must adopt the means of acquiring perfection. According to St. Thomas, a person in holy orders is bound to greater sanctity and perfection than a nun, or a religious who is not in holy orders. The holy Doctor says that for the exercise of holy orders "requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status."—2. 2. qu. 184, art. 8. And in another place (q. 189, a. 1, ad 3.) he says, "Ordines sacri præexigunt sanctitatem; sed status religionis est exercitium quoddam ad sanctitatem." St. John Chrysostom says: "Multo magis integritas huic (sacerdoti) quam illis (monachis) necessaria."—Lib. 2, de Sacer., c. 3. Hence an ecclesiastic who aspires to the priesthood must aspire to perfection, and must adopt the means of attaining it. According to St. Alphonsus, the great means of perfection, in the adoption of which every confessor has to direct souls whom God may call to perfection, either in the world or in religion, are, first, mental prayer; secondly, the frequentation of the sacraments; and thirdly, the practice of mortification.

Mental prayer is not absolutely necessary, but it certainly is morally necessary in order to obtain perseverance. This necessity arises from two causes: the first is, that the eternal truths are seen, not with the eyes of the body, but by the reflection of the understanding. Hence he who neglects meditation does not see these truths, and in consequence of not seeing them, he shall scarcely see the importance of salvation, the means which he ought to adopt, and the obstacles which he has to overcome; and thus he shall scarcely be saved. Secondly, the soul that neglects meditation does not pray for God's graces; but to pray for them is necessary, not only because it is strictly commanded, but also beause it is a means without which we cannot observe the divine precepts, since God does not ordinarily give his graces to any adult unless he prays for them. Now, he who does

not make mental prayer, neither sees his spiritual wants nor the necessity of asking aid from God to resist temptations, and save his soul. Hence he seldom or never prays for God's assistance, and by neglecting to pray for it, he is lost. They who neglect mental prayer, pray with a distracted mind. Hence many who say the Rosary, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and other vocal prayers, continue to live in the state of sin. But it is impossible for him who continues to make mental prayer to remain in sin: he shall either give up meditation or renounce sin.

Mental prayer contains three parts: the preparation, the meditation, and the conclusion. In the preparation there are three acts: the first, an act of faith of the presence of God; secondly, an act of humility; thirdly a petition for light. They may be made in the following manner: 1. My God, I believe you present within me, and I adore you from the abyss of my nothingness. 2. Lord, I ought now to be in hell on account of my sins; I am sorry for having offended you; pardon me in your mercy. 3. Eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus and the prayers of Mary, give me light, that I may draw fruit from this meditation. Then say a Hail Mary, that she may obtain this light for you, and a short prayer to St. Joseph, your Angel Guardian, and your holy patron, that they may ask it for you. The preparation should be short but made with fervour.

In the meditation, after reading the points, reflect on the part by which you feel your devotion most excited. But remember that the advantage of mental prayer does not consist in reflecting on the truths of faith so much as in the three great fruits of meditation. More of the time of mental prayer should be given to reflections on the eternal maxims by those who live in the world than by those who live in religious communities, and devote a good deal of time each day to spiritual reading and other devout exercises.

The three principal fruits of meditation are, first, *pious affections;* secondly, fervent petitions to God for *all* the graces necessary for salvation; thirdly,

firm resolutions to perform some particular acts of virtue, or to avoid some particular defect. The first fruit of meditation consists in pious affections; that is, in making interior acts of the different virtues, such as acts of adoration and praise of God's majesty, acts of thanks for his infinite benefits, acts of love of his infinite goodness and perfection, and desires to love him as much as he wishes and deserves to be loved by us; acts of acknowledgment of our unworthiness to receive from him anything but hell; accompanied with acts of confidence in his infinite goodness, mercy, and power, and in his promises to save all who invoke his aid, and in the passion of Christ, and the intercession of his mother and the saints; acts of sorrow for our past sins; acts of resignation to the divine will in all things; and acts of oblation of ourselves to God, that he may dispose of us as he pleases. Some of these, or similar acts suggested by our reflections, should be made in all our meditations. But there are three of them which should never be omitted in any meditation. First, acts of sorrow for all our past sins; secondly, acts of resignation to the divine will, and of oblation of ourselves, and of all that we are and have, to the love and glory of God for time and for eternity; thirdly, acts of the love of God, and desires to love him as much as the angels love him in heaven, and as much as he deserves to be loved by us. These acts must be made with the heart; but they may be also expressed in words.

The second fruit of mental prayer consists in fervent petitions to God for the lights and graces which we see in our meditations that we stand in need of, and for *all* the graces necessary to bring us infallibly to eternal life. This is, perhaps, the most important and essential part of meditation, or mental prayer; because, of all the different kinds of prayer, that which is called *petition* is the most indispensable. It is this kind of prayer that all theologians commonly teach to be as necessary for the salvation of adults as baptism is for that of infants; and as no infant can enter the kingdom of heaven without baptism, so no adult shall obtain eternal life without asking of

God the graces necessary for salvation. Hence, in the introduction to his book on prayer, St. Liguori says that were it in his power, he would publish as many copies of that little work as there are Christians on earth, and would give to each a copy, that each might understand the absolute necessity of prayer for salvation. Hence the saint relates that the celebrated Father Segneri said of himself, that until he studied theology he was accustomed to spend the greater part of the time of his meditations in reflections and pious affections, but that afterwards God opened his eyes, and thenceforward he employed himself generally in asking God's graces. And he adds, "If there is any good in me, I ascribe it to this practice of recommending myself to God." St. Liguori tells the reader to do the same. On account of this strict and indispensable necessity of asking God's graces, St. Liguori says that he made it a rule of his Order, that in every mission conducted by the members of his congregation, there should be a sermon on prayer. Hence, he says, that every preacher should, in almost all his sermons, exhort his hearers to the practice of prayer, and should admonish them never to cease to call for aid in all their temptations, at least by invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary, as long as the temptation continues. Hence he cautions every confessor not to be content with endeavouring to excite his penitents to sorrow for their sins and to a firm purpose of amendment, but to be also careful to impress upon them the necessity of praying for grace to be faithful to their resolutions, and of asking the divine aid as often as they are tempted to offend God. Hence he concludes his book on prayer in the following words: "I say, and I repeat, and I shall repeat while I live, that our salvation depends altogether on prayer, and that, on that account, all writers in their books, all preachers in their sermons, and all confessors in the tribunal of penance, should continually exclaim and repeat, 'Pray, pray, and never cease to pray; for if you continue to pray, your salvation is secure; if you give up prayer your perdition is inevitable.'"

In our meditations we should ask, not one, nor two, nor a thousand graces, but all the lights and graces, without a single exception, which are necessary to bring us, and to bring us efficaciously and infallibly, to eternal glory. "All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you."—Mark xi. 24. The Son of God was not content with saying "all things," or "whatsoever," but to exclude the possibility of a single grace being excepted, he said, "All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray . . . . . shall come unto you." Prayer then, is a universal means, by which every single grace necessary to bring us infallibly to eternal life, may be obtained as infallibly as the Son of God cannot be a liar. In this respect it differs from the sacraments, from penitential works, and the other means which God has given us in order to obtain eternal life. These are particular means, each producing or procuring particular graces. Baptism produces one grace, and penance another; the same for the other sacraments or means of salvation. But to none of these, nor to all put together, without prayer, has God promised all the graces necessary for eternal life. Prayer is the only means to which he has promised all the efficacious helps and graces necessary for our salvation. It is a means given to all: for God gives the grace of prayer to every adult; he gives it to the most obdurate of sinners as well as to the most holy of the saints. And by making a good use of this grace of prayer, the worst sinner may obtain, as infallibly as the greatest saint, every efficacious grace necessary for his salvation, and may thus infallibly secure everlasting glory. For Jesus Christ has promised to hear the prayers of all—of sinners as well as of saints. "For every one that asketh, receiveth,"—Luke xi. 10. "Every one," says the author of the *Imperfect Work*, "whether he be a sinner or a saint." On the day of judgment, then, the reprobate shall be without excuse. If they say that they had not strength to resist the temptations by which they were assailed, Jesus Christ shall answer: If you had not strength, why did you not ask it? If you

had prayed for it, I should certainly have given it to you. If they say that after they had fallen into sin, they were unable to rise from it, he will answer: If you had recourse to me, I should have raised you from the state of sin; I would have clothed you with my grace, and have brought you to the glory of eternity. Hence, in meditation, when the heart is excited to fervour by the consideration of the eternal truths, we all should make frequent and fervent petitions in the name of Jesus Christ, for all the efficacious lights and helps and graces which are necessary to secure infallibly our eternal happiness. These petitions must be always made in the heart, but may also be expressed with the tongue. But though we should ask in our meditations for all the graces we stand in need of, and especially for the graces suggested by our reflections, we must be careful to pray in every meditation for three graces in particular. First, for the pardon of all our past sins; secondly, for the gift of the love of God; and thirdly, for the gift of final perseverance, and for the grace to persevere till death in praying for this great gift. We should ask these three graces not only in our meditations, but also at Mass, after communion, and in all our spiritual exercises. We ought first to pray for the pardon of all our past sins; because we do not know, and shall not know till death, whether they have been pardoned or not. The Scripture tells us that we know not whether we are worthy of love or hatred (Eccl. ix. 1). And though God had revealed to us that our sins were forgiven, we should still continue till death to beg of him "to wash us still more from our sins, and cleanse us from our iniquities." For after the guilt of sin has been remitted, the temporal punishment due to it frequently and generally remains. Among the temporal punishments due to sin, after the remission of its guilt, the saints count the withholding of many of God's graces. From eternity God prepared for us all, abundant graces to work out our salvation Some of these graces were necessary to lead us to a high degree of perfection, and to make us saints; others were so necessary for our salvation, that with-

out them we should not be saved. In punishment of sin, even after its guilt has been remitted, God sometimes withholds both these classes of graces; and, therefore, our past sins after they have been forgiven, may be the cause of our damnation, by preventing God from bestowing upon us certain graces, without which we shall be certainly lost. Hence the Holy Ghost tells us not to be without fear about sin forgiven. "De propitiato peccato noli esse sine metu."—Eccl., v. 5. In order, then, to secure not only the pardon of all our past sins, but also the graces which may be withheld in punishment of them, and particularly the graces without which we should be lost, we must pray frequently and fervently in our meditations, for the complete and entire remission of all our sins, and of all the penalties due to them. By frequent and fervent petitions for these objects, every one, even the most abandoned sinner, however enormous his crimes may have been, can easily and infallibly avert the chastisement of sin, which consists in the withholding of God's graces; and may thus infallibly prevent the danger of his past sins being the cause of his damnation, after their guilt has been remitted. Secondly, we must ask with fervour the gift of God's love. St. Francis de Sales says that the gift of divine love should be the object of all our prayers, because it brings with it all the other good gifts of God. Love is the golden chain by which the soul is united and bound to her God.—"Charity," says St. Paul, "is the bond of perfection." Every act of love is a treasure which secures to us the friendship of God. "I love them that love me."—Prov., viii. 17. "He that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father."—John, xiv. 21. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."—1 Peter, iv. 8. St. Thomas teaches that every act of love merits a degree of eternal glory. Acts of love may be made, first, in the following manner: "My God, I love you with my whole heart; I desire to see you loved by all men as much as you deserve to be loved: I desire to love you as much as the angels love you in heaven, and as much as you wish me to love you. I offer all I am

and have to your love and glory for time and eternity; and I ask you, O my God, to help me to love you, I ask you to take away from my heart the love of myself and the love of the world, and to fill my soul with your pure and holy love, that I may seek nothing but your love and glory; and my own salvation." Secondly, acts of love may be made by resigning ourselves in all things to the divine will, saying: "Lord, make known to me what is pleasing to you: I am ready to do it, whatever it may be." Thirdly, by offering ourselves to God without reserve, saying: "O my God, do what you please with me, and with all that belongs to me." Such offerings of ourselves to God, are acts of love, very pleasing in his eyes. Hence St. Teresa used to offer herself to him fifty times in the day. To rejoice in the infinite happiness of God is also a most perfect act of love. In begging the grace of God's love, we ought to ask the gift of perfect resignation and conformity to the divine will in all things, particularly in all crosses and afflictions. Thirdly, we must, above all, pray with great fervour in our meditations for the grace of final perseverance. This is, according to Blessed Leonard, the grace of graces; this is the grace on which our salvation depends; if God gives it to us we shall be saved; if not, we shall be lost. This is the gift which distinguishes the elect in heaven from the reprobate in hell. If the elect had not got it, they should be lost; and if the damned had received it, they should now be in glory. It crowns all the other gifts of God: without it they shall be a source of greater damnation. This gift God gives to infants without any co-operation on their part, by taking them out of life before they lose their baptismal innocence. But St. Augustine teaches that God never gives it to any adult that does not pray for it. The grace of final perseverance is a special gift which we cannot merit as the Council of Trent teaches in these words: "Aliunde haberi non potest, nisi ab eo qui potens est, eum qui stat, statuere ut perseveranter stet."—Sess. 6, c. xiii. We cannot merit it by the sacraments, nor by penitential austerities, nor by alms-deeds.

God has given us only one means of infallibly obtaining it, and that is, by praying for it continually till our last breath. It is not enough to ask this gift once nor twice, nor for a year, nor for ten years; our petitions for it must cease only with our life, and must be frequently offered in meditation, which is the fittest time for asking God's graces. Whoever asks it to-day, obtains it for to-day; but he that does not pray for it till to-morrow, may fall on to-morrow and be lost. In the preface to his book on the Victories of the Martyrs, St. Liguori says, that in the History of the Martyrs of Japan, it is related, that an old man condemned to a slow and painful death, remained for a long time firm under his torments, but when he was on the point of breathing his last, he ceased to recommend himself to God, denied the faith and instantly expired. Hence, in his Treatise on Prayer, the holy author says that "to obtain perseverance, we must recommend ourselves continually to God, morning and evening, in our meditations, at Mass, communion, and at all times, but particularly in the time of temptations, saying and repeating continually, 'Assist me, O Lord, assist me; keep your hand upon me; do not abandon me; have mercy on me.'" In order, then, to secure the grace of final perseverance, we must not cease till death to pray continually for it. And in order to persevere to the end in praying for this great gift, we must unceasingly ask of God the grace that we may continue till our last breath to implore it of him.

"If," says St Liguori, in his book on prayer, "we wish not to be forsaken by God, we must never cease to pray that he may not abandon us. If we continually beg his aid, he will most certainly assist us always, and will never permit us to lose him, or to be separated from his love. And to secure this constant aid and protection from heaven, let us be careful to ask without ceasing, not only the gift of final perseverance, and the graces necessary to obtain it, but also to beg, by anticipation, of the Lord, that great gift which he promised to his elect by the mouth of the prophet—the grace to persevere in

prayer: 'And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayer.'—Zach., xii. 10. Oh! how great a gift is the spirit of prayer, or the grace to pray always! Let us, then, never cease to ask from God this grace and spirit of continual prayer. If we persevere to the end in prayer, we shall certainly obtain the gift of perseverance, and every grace we stand in need of; for God cannot violate his promise to hear all who invoke his aid." This part of mental prayer, which consists in asking of God *all* the graces which we stand in need of, is most important for all Christians, but particularly for priests who are exposed to all the dangers of persons living in the world, and who are, at the same time, bound by the obligations of the priesthood, and by the daily and hourly and awful obligations arising from the care of souls. It is by attending to this part of meditation that we acquire a habit and a facility of turning to God for help in all difficulties, dangers and temptations: without attending to it, we shall scarcely ever acquire this habit and facility. Now, without this habit, it will be impossible for priests charged with the pastoral duties, to avoid mortal sin in the discharge of these duties, and in the difficult temptations by which they are often assailed. St. Augustine teaches that, ordinarily, God does not give, even to the saints, grace to fulfil difficult precepts or duties, or to resist violent temptations, unless they pray for it. Without our asking it, God gives us all grace to do what is easy, but not what is difficult. Even to the saints he only promises to give grace to pray for strength to do what is difficult, and to conquer violent temptations; and this grace he grants to the most hardened sinner as well as to the saint, and has given it to every adult that ever lived, from the time of Adam to the present day. Now, the whole life of a pastor or curate is, as has been already said, a continued series of difficult duties, and of violent temptations to neglect those duties and to offend. If, then, pastors and curates do not send up a series of petitions corresponding to this series of duties and temptations,

God will not give them the strength necessary to fulfil the former, and to resist the latter: thus they will fall into a series of mortal sins, and shall be lost. And how shall they be able to send up such a series of petitions if they have not acquired a facility of turning to God for help, by the practise of fervent petitions in their meditations? Moreover, every human being, the moment he arrives at the use of reason, engages in a warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil: three powerful enemies who are actively employed every instant of his life in laying snares for the destruction of his soul. This warfare shall cease only with his life. Can he expect to be victorious in his daily and hourly struggles with these enemies, unless by unceasing petitions to the throne of mercy, he obtains the omnipotent grace of God to enable his weakness and sinfulness to conquer and to persevere till death in conquering, such powerful opponents? Of the rebel angels, St. Gelasius says, that "receiving the grace of God in vain, they could not persevere because they did not pray." The rebel angels were pure spirits; they were more perfect than we are; they had not to contend with the corruption of their own flesh, for they had no bodies; but our flesh is constantly rebelling against the spirit. They were not subject to the corrupt inclination of concupiscence; all their natural inclinations led them to love God above all things; our inclinations constantly draw us away from God and lead us to sin. They had no temptation from the world, for all creatures only served to inspire them with sentiments of admiration of the power and goodness of the Creator; but every object around us fixes our heart on the world and takes away our thoughts and affections from heaven and God. Neither had they any devil to tempt them; but all the devils are leagued against us: they are constantly going about like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour. Now, if in spite of all their perfection, though free from all the attacks of the enemies by which we are constantly assailed, the angels fell, and could not but fall, because they did not pray, shall

we, who are all weakness and corruption, without continual prayer, be able to persevere till death in victoriously repelling the unceasing assaults of the world, of the flesh, and of the devil? No: unless by making, in our meditations and other spiritual exercises, frequent petitions to God for his grace, we acquire a habit and a facility of turning to him for help against our enemies in all difficulties and temptations, it will be at least morally impossible for us, particularly if we should be charged with the care of souls, to persevere till death in the faithful discharge of all the difficult duties and obligations that shall fall upon us, and in escaping all the dangers of perdition to which we shall be exposed. To enable weakness and sinfulness like ours, to conquer till death the enemies that are constantly opposed to us, God must impart to us his own omnipotent grace; and that he will not do unless we ask it continually. To preserve and perfect and render permanent the habit acquired in meditation, of begging God's graces, it will be very useful to accustom ourselves every day to raise our hearts to God at least once in every hour, when we hear the clock strike, and to offer to him ourselves, and all our thoughts and words and actions, through Jesus Christ, to his glory, and to obtain for ourselves the grace of eternal life, and always to accompany that oblation with a secret petition for the three graces mentioned above; that is, for the pardon of all our sins, for the gift of God's love, and for the gift of final perseverance. In the chapter on meditation in "The Nun Sanctified," &c., St. Alphonsus recommends Religious to raise their hearts to God every quarter of an hour. By this custom we shall fulfil the obligation of praying always; because by offering all our actions to God through Jesus Christ, in order to obtain eternal glory, we make every act of our life a prayer for the grace of eternal life. If in the retirement of a college, ecclesiastics do not acquire the habit and facility of asking God's graces, how can they expect to acquire it amid the distracting duties of the mission?

The third fruit of mental prayer consists in making

a firm resolution to do some particular good acts, or to avoid some particular defects. It is always necessary to ask God's help to be faithful to our resolutions: otherwise we shall certainly violate them.

The conclusion contains three acts. First, an act of thanksgiving to God for the lights received in meditation; secondly, a firm purpose to practise the resolutions made; thirdly, a petition to the eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus and the prayers of Mary, for grace to be faithful to them. These acts may be made in the following manner: I thank you, O my God, for the lights you have given me; I purpose to fulfil the resolutions I have made; I ask the grace to execute them. Let the meditations be closed with a *Pater* and *Ave*, to recommend to God the souls in purgatory, the prelates of the Church, all sinners, and all our relatives, friends, and benefactors. We should never omit to pray at the end of our meditation for the holy souls in purgatory, and for poor sinners. At the end of our meditation we should, according to St. Francis de Sales, gather a nosegay of flowers; that is, we should call to mind some sentiment which we would remember during the day, and thus excite our fervour in God's service. After meditation, we should endeavour to fulfil, as soon as possible, the resolutions we have made. Above all, we must never give up, or shorten our meditation on account of aridity; neither should we be disturbed though we were left in desolation of spirit for a long time. Let us go to meditation in order to honour and please our God. If he speak to us, or give us his consolations, let us thank him; if not, let us be content to remain with peace in his divine presence; adoring him, and laying before him our wants, and, if he do not speak to us, he will certainly be pleased with our efforts and fidelity, and in proportion to our confidence he will hear our supplications. Should we be molested with distractions, let us first ask help from God by repeating several times some short prayer, such as, "Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me," "Jesus, have mercy on me, and assist me: Mary,

have pity on me, and pray for me." After these short prayers let us, then, quietly apply ourselves to the subject of the meditation. If the distractions return a thousand times, let us each time do the same, and our meditation will be well made, though the whole time were spent in banishing distractions. St. Alphonsus recommends all to make two meditations every day, each of half an hour, or, at least, one meditation of half an hour every morning.

The second means is, the frequentation of the sacraments. They who desire information on this subject are referred to the last edition of the "Visits to the Blessed Sacraments," in which they shall find a translation of St. Alphonsus' instructions regarding the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and the eucharist. In his "Catechetical Instructions for the People," the saint says: "Let every one communicate at least every eight days. Persons who lead a spiritual life, make mental prayer, and abstain from deliberate venial sins, may, with the advice of their confessor, go to communion several times in the week; but others, who lead a more tepid life, will do well, in order to be able at least to preserve themselves in the grace of God, to communicate every Sunday, or, at least, every fifteen days." Every ecclesiastic should endeavour to go to communion at least once a week, and to spend the day of communion in great recollection.

The third means is the practice of mortification. Interior mortification consists in subduing our disorderly passions by never acting through self-love, vanity, or human motives, but always through a motive of pleasing God, by bearing patiently with the defects, annoyance, and injustice of others; by never consenting, in thought or word, or action, to dislike, resentment, or dissatisfaction towards others; by not yielding to disturbance of mind in troubles or afflictions; by being humble and agreeable to all; by not seeking to do our own will; by never speaking or acting as long as the soul is disturbed by any passion. St. Francis de Sales said: "I have made a compact

with my tongue, never to speak, and with myself, never to act, as long as my heart is disturbed."

Exterior mortification consists in abstaining from sensual pleasures. First, by the exact observance of every rule, and by the punctual discharge of every duty of our state of life, no matter how painful the fulfilment of these rules and duties may be to flesh and blood; secondly, by refusing to each of the senses all unlawful indulgence, and even many innocent gratifications. We ought to mortify the eyes: first, by never looking at any forbidden or dangerous object; secondly, by frequently abstaining from looking at objects of lawful curiosity, by keeping the eyes cast down, and by great modesty in all our looks. We should mortify the hearing by not listening to words against modesty or charity, and by not seeking after useless news. We should mortify the smell by abstaining from the use of perfume; the tongue by never uttering a word against modesty or charity; by the practice of silence; by abstaining from speaking of ourselves, or on what pleases our self-love or vanity; by temperance in eating and drinking; by abstaining at each meal from some small thing which no one but God can notice; by not eating out of meals; by some particular mortification on Fridays and Saturdays; by not seeking after delicious or savoury meats; by not complaining when food happens to be cold or not well dressed.

The touch is mortified by not seeking too much comfort in clothes, bedding, and the like; by not going unnecessarily to the fire in winter; by not complaining of sickness, fatigues, inconveniencies, or interior troubles; by the use of the discipline, and such instruments of penance. It is necessary to know that no one ought to undertake exterior mortifications, particularly if they are singular or very painful, without the leave of his confessor. Every one ought to regulate his mortifications by the advice of his spiritual director. The ecclesiastic who makes mental prayer at least for half an hour every day, who frequents the sacraments, and attends to

the practice of mortification, shall certainly make progress in the perfection necessary for the discharge of the pastoral duties, and shall prepare during life to make well the great step which we all must one day make from time to eternity.

Secondly, in order to acquire the qualifications necessary for the fulfilment of the pastoral obligations, an ecclesiastic must observe the rules, and discharge the duties of the college. By the faithful observance of his rules and duties, he practises the most useful of all mortifications—mortifications prescribed by the will of God—he acquires great controul over the senses: great controul over the flesh which loathes the fatigue of constant study, and of frequent spiritual exercises; great controul over all the inclinations of corrupt nature, which cannot bear the restraint of rule. By the practice of silence he acquires the spirit of solitude and recollection; by assiduous application to his studies, and by the discharge of other painful and laborious duties, he acquires a competent knowledge of the sacred sciences, along with the spirit of labour and of study; and by the fervent performance of the religious exercises of the college, particularly by the practice of meditation, and of frequent aspirations, and by the frequentation of the sacraments, he acquires a great spirit of prayer. Every ecclesiastic should observe the rules of the college with exactness. First, in order to mortify self-will, and to acquire the spirit of ecclesiastical obedience by the practice of obedience to the rules sanctioned by his superiors; secondly, because by violating any rule without a just cause, he is almost always guilty of a venial sin. For, as St. Liguori says, (Nun Sanctified, chap. 7, § 4. n. 7,) it is the common opinion of theologians, that to violate without sufficient necessity, even the smallest rules which are not obligatory under the penalty of moral guilt, is at least a venial transgression. Speaking of the rule of his order which has not the force of a strict precept, St. Thomas, after stating that the violation of the vows is a mortal sin, says that '*the transgression of the other rules is only a venial fault.*'

—2. 2. q. 186, a. q. ad 1. I have said that to break any rule without sufficient cause, is *at least a venial sin;* for when the violation of rule is productive of serious injury or of great scandal to the community, it may be a mortal sin. For example, to disturb habitually the general silence; to enter the cells of your companions; to break, without leave, the fasts prescribed by rule; and similar irregularities, sometimes rob the soul of sanctifying grace. But that violation of rule is at least a venial sin, cannot be doubted. First, because a Religious by transgressing her rule, neglects the means of attaining the perfection to which she is bound to aspire. Secondly, because she is unfaithful to the promise which at her profession she made to observe the rules of the community. Thirdly, because by her bad example in transgressing rule, she disturbs the good order of the community. Fourthly, and lastly, because every infraction of rule proceeds from self-love, and is a departure from the will of God. Unnecessary transgressions of rule are certainly not acts of virtue. Neither can they be said to be indifferent; for how can we call an action indifferent which is performed through self-will; which gives bad example, and destroys the order of regular discipline? If, then, the violation of rule cannot be good or indifferent, it must be sinful." In another place the saint says: "Theologians generally maintain, that to transgress, without sufficient necessity, even the rules which of themselves do not impose a moral obligation, is almost always a venial fault. Because the wilful and unnecessary violation of rule, generally proceeds from passion, or from sloth, and consequently must be at least a venial offence. Hence St. Francis de Sales, in his *Entertainments*, teaches that though the rule of the visitation did not oblige under penalty of sin, still the infraction of it could not be excused from the guilt of a venial transgression. *Because*, says the saint, *by disobedience to her rule, a Religious dishonours the things of God, violates her profession, disturbs the community, and dissipates the fruits of the good example, which every one should give.* Whoever, then,

breaks the rule in the presence of others, will, according to the saint, incur the additional guilt of scandal. It should be observed, that the breach of rule may be even a mortal sin, when it is so frequent as to do serious injury to regular observance."—Nun Sanctified, chap. 4, § 5. Hence, though the rules of the college should not bind under sin, the violation of them without a just cause, is always a venial sin; and if it be habitual, and grievously injurious to general discipline, it is a mortal sin. Ecclesiastics cannot say that a Religious is bound to greater perfection than they are. St. Thomas teaches the contrary. The holy doctor says that for the exercise of holy orders "requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status."—2. 2. q. 184, a. 8. Besides, the reasons by which theologians prove that in a Religious the violation of a rule which does not of itself bind under sin, is a venial fault, have equal force to show that an ecclesiastic who violates a rule not obligatory under pain of sin, is also guilty of a venial offence. In his directions for the government of ecclesiastical seminaries, St. Liguori says, "the bishop should use extreme rigour in dismissing from the seminary, the incorrigible and the scandalous. By the *incorrigible*, I mean those who fall into frequent habitual faults, though not grievious, nor productive of scandal, and who, after being several times admonished and chastised, give little reason to hope that they will correct their defects. A student of this description, though not positively scandalous, by his tepid and imperfect life, by his bad example, always causes some scandal, brings others into tepidity, and gives but little reason to hope that he will become a good ecclesiastic. By the *scandalous*, I mean those who are guilty of faults which give positive scandal: who, for example, induce their companions to transgress any rule, or refuse to submit to an order of the bishop or superior. A student would be guilty of still more grievous scandal were he to give bad example by immodest words, or any immodest action. The safest rule for the bishop is instantly to expel such a student from the seminary."

Every ecclesiastic, then, should observe his rule, and particularly the rule of silence, and the rule which forbids any student to enter the rooms of his companions. Because, if by the frequent and habitual violation of these rules, he does a grievous injury to the general observance, he is guilty of mortal sin; secondly, he should observe the rule of silence, because the neglect of it is destructive of study, of recollection, and the spirit of prayer, and renders fruitless the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, which "*like the whistling of a gentle air*," (3 Kings, xix. 12.) are heard only when the soul is undisturbed by noise, and enjoys the repose of solitude; thirdly, because every ecclesiastic should endeavour by the practice of silence, to acquire perfect control over the tongue, which, according to St. James, though a small member, produces *a world of evil;* and like a spark in a wood, causes an immense conflagration. Lastly, because he should endeavour to sanctify the tongue by mortifying his natural propensity to indulge in conversation. The tongue of a priest should be holy. First, because it is in the hands of God the instrument by which the body of Jesus Christ is called down from heaven and offered in sacrifice for the sins of the world: secondly, because it is the member by which the forms of all the sacraments are pronounced, and the fruits of the death of the Son of God applied to the souls of men; thirdly, because it is by the tongue that the truths of salvation are announced to God's people. During his collegiate course, every ecclesiastic should attend to his studies with zeal and diligence. First, in order to acquire the knowledge necessary for the pastoral duties, without which knowledge he will be a blind leader of the blind, and will lead himself and thousands into the pit of hell; secondly, in order to acquire the spirit of study, which will enable him to fulfil the obligation by which he will be hereafter bound under pain of mortal sin to attend to the study of theology, and to the study necessary to prepare instructions and sermons for the people. If in the retirement of the college he neglect study, will he, when free from restraint, attend to it

in the midst of wordly dissipation, of so many laborious employments, and of so many temptations to worldly society and amusements? No: he will violate the duty of study on the mission; and, as St. Liguori says of confessors who neglect the study of theology, he will live in the state of damnation. Every ecclesiastic must, above all, be faithful and fervent in the discharge of his religious duties. First, in order to acquire in the retirement of the college, a great spirit of prayer, which he never will acquire amid the distractions of the world, and without which, as appears from what has been already said, it is utterly impossible for a pastor to save himself or his flock; secondly, in order to acquire the practice of the holy exercise of the presence of God.

"The practice of the presence of God," says St. Alphonsus, "is justly called by spiritual masters the foundation of a spiritual life, which consists in three things: in the avoidance of sins; the practice of virtue; and in union with God. These three effects, the presence of God produces: it preserves the soul from sins; leads her to the practice of virtue; and moves her to unite herself to God by means of holy love.

"As to the first effect, the avoidance of sins, there is no more efficacious means of subduing the passions, of resisting temptations, and consequently of avoiding sins, than the remembrance of God's presence. The angelic doctor says: 'Si Dominum præsentem cogitaremus vix aut nunquam peccaremus.'—Op. 58, cap. 2. If we always thought that God was looking at us, we would never, or scarcely ever do what is displeasing in his eyes. And St. Jerome has written that the remembrance of God's presence closes the door against all sins. 'The remembrance of God,' says the holy doctor, 'shuts out all sins.'—In 4. Ezech.

"All the sins of men flow from their losing sight of the divine presence. 'Every evil,' says St. Teresa, 'happens to us because we do not reflect that God is present with us, but imagine that he is at a distance.' And, before her, David said the same: 'God is not

before his eyes ; his ways are filthy at all times.'—Ps. x. Secund. Hebr.

"On the other hand, the saints by the thought that God was looking at them, have bravely repelled all the assaults of their enemies. This thought gave courage to holy Susanna to repel the temptations of the elders, and even to despise their threats against her life. Hence she courageously said to them: 'It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.'—Dan., xiii. 23.

"Behold how great the efficacy of the remembrance of the divine presence to make us avoid sins! Let us, then, always pray to the Lord, saying with Job: 'Set me beside thee, and let any man's hand fight against me.'—Job, xvii. 3. My God, place me in your presence ; that is, remind me in every place that you see me, and then let all my enemies assail me, I shall always defeat them. Hence St. Chrysostom concludes: "Si ita nos ipsos disposuerimus, nihil mali cogitabimus, nihil mali dicemus, nihil mali faciemus." —Hom 7, ad Phil. 3. If we keep ourselves always in the presence of God, the thought that he sees all our thoughts, that he hears all our words, and observes all our actions, will preserve us from thinking any evil, from speaking any evil, and from doing any evil.

"As to the second effect—the practice of virtue—the presence of God is also a great means. Oh! what valour does a soldier exhibit in the presence of his sovereign. The sole thought that his prince, by whom he shall be punished or rewarded, is present, inspires him with great courage and strength. Thus, also, when (an ecclesiastic) is in the presence of his superior, with what exterior recollection does he not pray? with what modesty and humility does he not treat his companions? with what care does he not execute the directions which he receives? Hence, if they reflected that God was looking at all their actions, (all ecclesiastics) would do all things well, with a pure intention, without seeking to please any one but God, and without any regard to human respect.

"As to the third effect of the divine presence, that is, to unite the soul with God, it is an infallible rule that love is always increased by the presence of the object loved. This happens even among men, although the more they converse together, the more their defects are discovered. How much more shall the love of a soul for God increase, if she keep him before her eyes; for the more she converses with him, the better she comprehends his beauty and amiableness? The morning and evening meditation are not sufficient to keep the soul united to God. St. Chrysostom says that even boiling water, if removed from the fire, soon returns to its natural temperature; and, therefore, after prayer it is necessary to preserve fervour by the presence of God, and by renewing our affections. David said that by the remembrance of his God, he was filled with joy and consolation: 'I remembered God and was delighted.'—Ps. lxxvi. 4. However great the affliction and desolation of a soul may be, if she loves God she shall be consoled, and freed from her affliction by the remembrance of her beloved Lord. Hence souls enamoured of God live always with a tranquil heart and in continual peace; because, like the sun-flower which always turns its face to the sun, they, in all occurrences and in all their actions, seek always to live and to act in the presence of God. 'A true lover,' says St. Teresa, 'always remembers her beloved.'

"Let us now come to the practice of this excellent exercise of the divine presence. This exercise consists partly in the operations of the understanding, and partly in the operations of the will. Of the understanding in beholding God present: of the will in uniting the soul with God by acts of humiliation, of adoration, of love, and the like. And, in the first place, with regard to the intellect, the presence of God may be practised in four ways. First, by imagining that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is present; that he is in our company, and that he sees us in whatever place we may be. We can at one time represent him in one mystery, and again in another. For example, now an infant lying in the manger of

Bethlehem; and again, a pilgrim flying into Egypt; now a boy working in the shop of Nazareth, and again, suffering as a criminal in his passion in Jerusalem; scourged, or crowned with thorns, or nailed to a cross.

"The second method, which is more secure and more excellent, is founded on the truth of faith, and consists in beholding, with the eyes of faith, God present with us in every place; in considering that he encompasses us, that he sees and observes whatsoever we do. We do not, indeed, see him with the eyes of the flesh. Neither do we see the air, and we know for certain that it surrounds us on every side, that we live in it. We do not see God, but our holy faith teaches us that he is always present with us. '*Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?*' (Jer. xxiii. 24.) Is it not true, says the Lord, that I fill heaven and earth by my presence? And as a sponge in the midst of the ocean is encompassed and saturated with water, so (says the apostle) we live in God, we move in God, and we have our being in God. '*In ipso vivimus, movemur et sumus.*' (Act. xvi. 18.) 'And our God,' says St. Augustine, 'observes every action, every word, every thought of each of us, as if he forgot all his other creatures, and had to attend to us alone.' Hence, observing all we do, say, and think, he marks and registers all, in order to demand an account on the day of accounts, and to give us, then, the reward, or the chastisement we have deserved. This second mode of practising the Divine presence does not fatigue the mind: for the exercise of it we need only enliven our faith, saying—'*My God, I believe, firmly, that you are here present.* To this act we can easily add the acts of love, or of resignation, or of purity of intention, and the like.

"The third means of preserving the remembrance of the presence of God, is to recognise him in his creatures, which have, from him, their being and their power of serving us. God is in the water to wash us, in the fire to warm us, in the sun to enlighten us, in food to nourish us, in clothes to cover us, and in like manner, in all other things which he has created

for our use. When we see a beautiful object, a beautiful garden, or a beautiful flower, let us think that there we behold a ray of the infinite beauty of God, who has given existence to that object. If we converse with a man of sanctity and learning, let us consider that it is God who imparts to him, a small portion of his own holiness and wisdom. Thus, also, when we hear harmonious sounds, when we feel a fragrant odour, or taste delicious meat or drink, let us remember that God is the Being who, by his presence, imparts to us these delights, that by them we may be induced to aspire to the eternal delights of paradise.

"Let us accustom ourselves to behold, in every object, God who presents himself to us in every creature; and let us offer him acts of thanksgiving and of love, remembering that from eternity he has thought of creating so many beautiful creatures, that we might love him. 'Disce amare,' says St. Augustine, 'in factura Factorem, ne teneat te, quod ab illo factum est, et amittas eum, a quo ipse factus es.'—In Ps. 9. Learn, he says, to love your Creator in creatures, and fix not your affection on what God has made, lest you should become attached to creatures and lose Him by whom you, too, have been created. This was the practice of the saint. At the sight of creatures he was accustomed to raise his heart to God; hence he exclaimed with love: '*Heaven and earth and all things tell me to love you!*' When he beheld the heavens, the stars, the fields, the mountains, he seemed to hear them saying: Augustine, love God, for he has created us for no other end than that you might love him.

"The fourth and most perfect means of remembering the divine presence is, to consider God within us. We need not ascend to heaven to find our God. Let us be recollected within ourselves, and in ourselves we shall find him. To treat in prayer with God as at a distance, causes a great deal of distraction. St. Teresa used to say, 'I never knew how to make mental prayer as it ought to be made, until God taught me this manner of praying: in this recollection within myself I have always found great profit.' To

come to what is practical, it is necessary to know that God is present in us, in a manner different from that in which he is present in other creatures. In us he is present as in his own temple, and his own house. 'Know you not,' says the apostle, 'that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.'—1 Cor. iii. 16. Hence our Saviour says that into a soul that loves God, he comes with the Father and the Holy Ghost, not to remain there for a short time, but to dwell in it for ever; and there to establish an everlasting habitation. 'If any one love me. . . . my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him.'—John, xiv. 23.

"The kings of the earth, though they have their great palaces, have, notwithstanding, particular apartments in which they generally live. God is in all places. His presence fills heaven and earth: but he dwells in a particular manner in our souls, and there he delights to remain, as in so many gardens of pleasure, as he himself tells us by the mouth of the apostle: 'I will dwell in them, and will walk among them, and I will be their God.'—2 Cor. vi. 16. There he wishes us to love him, and to pray to him; for he remains in us all, full of love and mercy, to hear our supplications, to receive our affections, to enlighten us, to govern us, to bestow on us his gifts, and to assist us in all that can contribute to our eternal salvation. Let us, then, endeavour, on the one hand, to enliven our faith in this great truth, and to annihilate ourselves at the sight of the great majesty that condescends to dwell within us; and on the other, let us be careful to make acts, at one time of confidence, at another, of oblation, and again, of love of his infinite goodness; now thanking him for his favours, at another time, delighting in his glory, and again, asking counsel in our doubts; consoling ourselves always in the possession of this sovereign good within us; certain that no created power can deprive us of him, and that he will never depart from us unless we first voluntarily banish him from our hearts.

"If, then, you ask me how often in the day you should remember the presence of God, I will answer

you with St. Bernard, that you ought to remember it every moment. 'As there is not a moment,' says the saint, 'in which we do not enjoy the benefits of God, so there is not a moment in which we should not remember God and prove our gratitude.' It is certain that your God is always thinking of you, and that he incessantly confers favours on you: at one time by his lights, at another by internal aids, and again, by loving visits. Is it not, then, ingratitude in you to be for any time forgetful of your God? It is, therefore, a duty to endeavour to remember always, or at least as often as we can, his divine presence. This was the advice which the Lord gave to Abraham: 'Walk before me, and be perfect.'—Gen., xvii. 1. Endeavour to walk always in my presence and you shall be perfect.

"Hitherto we have spoken of the operation of the intellect, allow me now to speak of the application of the will to the holy exercise of the divine presence. And it is necessary first to know, that to remain always before God, with the mind always fixed on him, is the happy lot of the saints; but in the present state it is morally impossible to keep up the presence of God without interruption. Hence we should endeavour to practice it to the best of our ability; not with a solicitous disquietude and indiscreet effort of the mind, but with sweetness and tranquillity. There are three means of facilitating the application of the will to this exercise. The first method consists in frequently raising the heart to God by short but fervent ejaculations, or loving affections towards God present with us. These may be practised in all places and at all times; in walking, at work, at meals, and at recreation. These affections may be acts of election, of desire, of resignation, of oblation, of love, of renunciation, of thanksgiving, of petition, of humiliation, of confidence, and the like. In whatever occupation you find yourself, you can very easily turn to God from time to time, and say to him: My God, I wish for you alone, and for nothing else. I desire nothing but to be all yours. Dispose as you please of me and of all I possess. I give myself entirely to

you. I love you more than myself. I wish only what you wish. I renounce all things for the love of you. I thank you for the great graces you have bestowed upon me. Assist me. Have mercy on me. Give me your holy love. Lord, I should be at this moment in hell. I delight in your felicity. I would wish that all loved you. Do not permit me to be separated from you. In you I place all my confidence. When shall I see you, and love you face to face? May all that I do and suffer, be done and suffered for you. May your holy will be always done.

"At certain more special times, it is necessary more particularly to enliven our faith in the divine presence. First, in the morning, when we awake, by saying: My God, I believe that you are here present and that you shall be present with me in every place to which I shall go this day: watch over me, then, in all places, and do not permit me to offend you before your divine eyes. Secondly, at the commencement of all our prayers, whether mental or vocal. Thirdly, on occasion of any temptation against patience or chastity. For example, if you are seized with any sharp pain, or receive any grievous insult, or if any scandalous object be presented to you, instantly arm yourself with the divine presence, and excite your courage by remembering that God is looking at you.

"The second method of preserving, by acts of the will, the presence of God, is to renew always in distracting occupations, the intention of performing them all with the intention of pleasing God; and, therefore, in the beginning of every employment or action, whether you apply yourself to work, go to table, or to recreation, or to repose, say: Lord, I do not intend in this work my pleasure, but only the accomplishment of your will. In the course of the action endeavour to renew your intention, saying: My God, may all be for your glory. By these acts the presence of God is preserved without fatiguing the mind; for the very desire of pleasing God is a loving remembrance of his presence. It is also useful to fix certain times, or particular signs, in order to remember the divine presence; as when the clock strikes, when you look

at the crucifix, when you enter or leave the cell. The third method is, when, during the day, you feel yourself very much distracted by external occupations, to retire for a little, and recollect yourself with God."—(*Abridged from the "True Spouse of Jesus Christ," by St. Alphonsus*, chap. 16, sec. 3.*)

Thirdly, an ecclesiastic should perform his religious duties with fervour, in order to acquire the devotions which every priest should practise during his whole life. First, devotion to the passion of Christ, which a priest commemorates as often as he says Mass, and which is to be acquired by frequent meditations on the sufferings of the Redeemer, and by the habit of occasionally, during the day, adoring, thanking, and praying to Jesus Christ in some stage of his passion; secondly, devotion to the holy Eucharist, without which the priest shall not be fit to stand on God's altar to offer to him in sacrifice the immaculate body of his Son, and which is to be acquired by assisting with fervour at the holy Mass, at the visitation of the Blessed Sacrament, by frequent communion, and by frequently in the day turning in spirit to the tabernacle to make acts of adoration, praise, thanks, and love to Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist. Thirdly, devotion to the Mother of God, without which it is very difficult for any priest to be saved. According to St. Liguori (Glories of Mary, vol. ii, page 352,) there is no devotion which we can perform in honour of the Virgin, so pleasing to her as the frequent invocation of her intercession. Hence the saint exhorts all to say a *Hail Mary* as often as they hear the clock strike, and as often as they leave or return home. In hearing confessions, every priest would do well to say an *Ave Maria* at the end of each confession, that the Virgin may obtain for him grace to fulfil his obligations towards the next penitent. Secondly, St. Liguori exhorts all to say every morning and evening three *Ave Marias* in honour of the immaculate conception

* This work is a most useful book for all priests whose duty is to direct to perfection the souls whom God may call to it, either in religion or in the world.

of the Blessed Virgin, and after each *Ave Maria* to say: O Mary, through your pure and immaculate conception, obtain for me purity of body and of soul. The saint recommends confessors to impose the devotion of saying the three *Aves*, &c., morning and evening, as a penance on penitents who are addicted to sins against purity. He relates two examples of persons who by the practice of this devotion obtained grace to renounce the habit of the grossest sins: one of these persons was preserved almost miraculously from relapsing into sin. Read the chapter in the *Selva* which treats on this subject. Fourthly, devotion to the poor souls in purgatory, by praying for them at meditation and Mass, by saying frequently in the day some of the short prayers of the Church, such as, *Fidelium animæ per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace*, by frequently applying indulgences and offering communions for their relief. At the hour of death St. Gertrude was afflicted at having done nothing for her own soul; all the good she had done during life she applied to the souls in purgatory. Jesus Christ appeared to her and said, "Gertrude, be comforted, for your charity to these suffering souls has been so pleasing to me, that at death you shall escape purgatory, and shall be accompanied to heaven by all my beloved spouses whom your suffrages have delivered from suffering."—Cat. Lectures of St. Liguori, page 273. Happy the ecclesiastic or Christian, who has delivered by his prayers and good works, even a single soul from the pains of purgatory. Surely that soul will not cease night or day during the remainder of his life, to intercede before the throne of God in behalf of her deliverer, saying: Suffer not, O Lord, the man to be lost who has rescued me from the prison of purgatory, and brought me to the enjoyment of your glory sooner than I deserved. The ecclesiastic who practises the means of acquiring Christian perfection, who observes all the rules and fulfils all the duties of the community in which he lives, and in the fulfilment of them endeavours to acquire the practise of the exercise of the presence of God, and the devotions which every priest should practise, shall,

at the end of his collegiate course, have acquired the virtues and all the qualifications necessary for the discharge of the missionary duties; he shall save his own soul, and the souls of thousands, who shall augment his glory for an endless eternity. But the ecclesiastic who violates his rules, neglects the duty of study, and the exercises of piety, shall be unfit as well for the priesthood as for the pastoral office; and should he be ordained, he shall be a rock of scandal to God's people, and shall bring himself and thousands to hell to increase his damnation for ever and ever.

Acts to be made often in the day, with the heart, by those who aspire to perfection; or who wish to practise the holy exercise of the presence of God.

My God, I adore, and praise, and thank you. I believe in you, I hope in you, I love you above all things. I desire to love you as much as you wish me to love you, and as much as you deserve to be loved by me. I offer all I am and have to your love. I rejoice in your infinite glory and felicity. I desire to see your adorable Divinity. I offer all my thoughts and words and actions, all my pains and troubles, and temptations, this day, in union with all the merits of Jesus Christ, of his holy Mother, of the saints, and of the Church, to your glory and my salvation; and in the name of Jesus Christ I humbly ask mercy and pardon, and sorrow and hatred for all my sins, by which I have offended you, who loved me with an infinite and an everlasting love. I ask the gift of your grace and of your love, and the grace to persevere in your grace and love till death. I ask you to preserve me from hell, which my sins have deserved, and to bring me to the glory of eternity, which was purchased for me by the passion and death of your Son.

THE SELVA, ETC.

Admonitions necessary for those who give the Spiritual Exercises to Priests.

THE present little work is entitled "SELVA, or a Collection of Matter, and not Discourses or Spiritual Exercises," because although I have endeavoured to collect the matter belonging to each subject, I have not observed the order necessary for a regular discourse, nor have I extended the thoughts. They are given without order, and expressed briefly, that the reader may select the authorities, subjects, and thoughts, which are most pleasing to him; and may afterwards arrange and extend them as he pleases, and thus make the discourse his own. For, experience shows that a preacher will scarcely deliver sentiments with fervour and zeal, unless he has first made them his own, at least by selecting them from among others, and arranging and extending them, in composing the discourse. Hence I have taken from different authors, several passages which have the same signification, that the preacher may select those which please him most.

I have said so much to explain the object of the work. Let him who gives the spiritual exercises to priests, be careful, first of all, to propose to himself a good end in his instructions: this end must be not to gain the character of a man of learning, of talent, and of eloquence, but only to give glory to God by the sanctification of his hearers. Secondly, let him be

careful not to seek to introduce into his sermons ideas foreign to the subject, nor new and lofty thoughts which serve only to fix the mind on the beauty of the conceptions, but leave the will dry and without fruit: let him be careful to say what he considers best calculated to move his hearers to make some good resolution. Thirdly, in order to attain that end, let him in his sermons frequently remind the audience of the truths of eternity, by the consideration of which perseverance is obtained, according to the words of the Holy Ghost, "*Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.*"—Eccl. vii, 40. It is true indeed, that certain priests dislike sermons on the last things, and are offended at seeing themselves treated like seculars, as if they were not, as well as seculars, to die and be judged. Let him, then, who gives the spiritual exercises, not omit at least to remind the audience several times of death, of judgment, and of eternity. These are the truths best calculated to effect a change of life in all who meditate upon them.

Fourthly, let the preacher be careful to inculcate as much as possible, what is practical. For example, the method of making mental prayer, thanksgiving after Mass, the correction of sinners, and above all the mode of hearing confessions, particularly the confessions of relapsing sinners, or of those who are in the proximate occasion of sin. In hearing the confessions of these two classes of penitents, many confessors err, either by an excess of rigour, or by too great a facility of giving absolution, (the latter is more frequent,) and thus they are the cause of the damnation of so many souls. Latin passages are soon forgotten: what is practical only remains in the mind.

Fifthly, let the preacher be careful to treat with respect and sweetness the priests who listen to him. With *respect* showing a veneration for them, often calling them men of learning and of sanctity, and when he inveighs against any vice, let him always speak in general terms, protesting that he speaks not of those who are present. Let him guard, in a special manner, against censuring any defect of any particular

person, as also against speaking in a tone of authority; but let him endeavour to preach in a familiar style, which is the best calculated to persuade and move. With respect and with *sweetness;* let him, then, never appear angry, nor ever break out into injurious words, which tend more to irritate the mind than to excite piety.

Sixthly, in sermons calculated to strike terror, let him not induce his hearers to despair of salvation or of amendment. Let him always leave to all, however abandoned, a means by which they may hope to change their life; animating them to confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of the divine Mother, and to have recourse by prayer to these two great anchors of hope. Let the preacher, in almost all his sermons, frequently and strongly recommend the exercise of prayer, that is, of the prayer of petition, which is the only means of obtaining the graces necessary for salvation.

Finally, above all, let the preacher be careful to expect the fruit not from his own labours, but from the divine mercy, and from his prayers, begging of God to give strength to his words. For we know, that, ordinarily, sermons produce scarcely any fruit in priests, and to induce, in the spiritual exercises, a priest to change his life if he is a sinner, or to become fervent if he is tepid, is almost a miracle, which seldom occurs. Hence, the conversion of priests must be the fruit of prayer more than of study.

FIRST CHAPTER.

On the dignity of the priesthood.

1. In his epistle to the Christians of Smyrna, St. Ignatious, Martyr says that the Priesthood is the most sublime of all created dignities: "Omnium apex est sacerdotium." St. Ephrem calls it an infinite dignity: "Miraculum est stupendum, magna, im-

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mensa, infinita, sacerdotii dignitas."—(de Sacerd.) St. Chrysostom says, that though its functions are performed on earth, the Priesthood should be numbered among the things of heaven: "Sacerdotium in terris peragitur, sed in rerum cœlestium ordinem referendum est."—Lib. 3, de Sac. c. 3. According to Cassian, the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights—he is inferior to God alone: "O sacerdos Dei, si altitudinem cœli contempleris, altior es; si dominorum sublimitatem, sublimior es; solo Deo et creatore tuo inferior es."—In Catal. Glor. Innocent the Third says, that the priest is placed between God and man; inferior to God, but superior to man: "Inter deum et hominem medius constitutus; minor Deo, sed major homine."—Serm. 2, in consecr. Pont. St. Denis calls the priest a divine man: "Qui sacerdotem dixit prorsus divinam intimavit virum." Hence he has called the Priesthood a divine dignity: "Angelica imo divina est dignitas."—De Cœl. Hier., c. 3. In fine, St. Ephrem says, that the gift of the sacerdotal dignity surpasses all understanding: "Excedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis." For us it is enough to know, that Jesus Christ has said that we should treat his priests as we would his own person: "He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me."—Luke x, 16. Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that "he who honours a priest, honours Christ, and he who insults a priest, insults Christ."—Hom. 17, in Mat. Through respect for the sacerdotal dignity, the venerable Mary of Ogna, used to kiss the ground on which a priest had walked,

2. The dignity of the priest is estimated from the exalted nature of his offices. Priests are chosen by God to manage on earth all his concerns and interests. "Genus," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "divinis mysteriis mancipatum."—Lib. 13, de Ador., &c. St. Ambrose has called the priestly office a divine profession: "Deifica professio."—de Dig. Sacerd., c. 3. A priest is a minister destined by God to be a public ambassador of the whole Church, to honour Him, and to obtain His graces for all the

faithful. The entire Church cannot give to God as much honour, nor obtain so many graces, as a single priest by celebrating a single mass; for the greatest honour which the whole Church without priests could give to God, would consist in offering to him in sacrifice, the lives of all men. But of what value are the lives of all men compared with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is a sacrifice of infinite value? What are all men before God but a little dust? "As a drop of a bucket.....as a little dust."—Isaiah xl. 15. They are but a mere nothing in his sight: "All nations are before him as if they had no being at all." —Ibid. v. 17. Thus, by the celebration of a single Mass, in which he offers Jesus Christ in sacrifice, a priest gives greater honour to the Lord, than if all men by dying for God, offered to him the sacrifice of their lives. By a single Mass, he gives greater honour to God than all the angels and saints, along with most holy Mary, have given, or shall give to him; for, their worship cannot be of infinite value like that which the priest celebrating on the altar offers to God.

3. Moreover, in the holy Mass, the priest offers to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the graces bestowed even on the blessed in Paradise; but such a thanksgiving all the saints together are incapable of offering to him. Hence it is, that on this account also, the priestly dignity is superior even to all celestial dignities. Besides, the priest is an ambassador of the whole world, to intercede with God and to obtain graces for all creatures: "Prouniverso terrarum orbe," says St. Chrysostom, "legatus intercedit apud Deum."—De Sacerd., Lib. 6, c. 4. The priest, according to St. Ephrem, "treats familiarly with God."—Lib. 1, de Sacerd. To priests every door is open.

4. Jesus has died to institute the Priesthood. It was not necessary for the Redeemer to die in order to save the world; a drop of his blood, a single tear, or prayer, was sufficient to procure salvation for all; for, such a prayer being of infinite value, should be sufficient to save not one but a thousand worlds. But

to institute the priesthood, the death of Jesus Christ has been necessary. Had he not died, where should we find the victim which the priests of the New Law now offer? a victim altogether holy and immaculate, capable of giving to God an honour worthy of God. All the lives of men and angels are not (as has been already said,) capable of giving to God an infinite honour like that which a priest offers to him by a single Mass.

5. The dignity of the priest is also estimated from the power which he has over the real and the mystic body of Jesus Christ, With regard to the power of priests over the real body of Jesus Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration the Incarnate Word has obliged himself to obey and to come into their hands under the sacramental species. We are struck with wonder when we hear that God obeyed the voice of Josue (obediente Deo voci hominis), and made the sun stand when he said "move not, O sun, towards Gabaon . . . . and the sun stood still."—Jos. x, 12. But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of his priests (hoc est corpus meum), God himself descends on the altar, that he comes wherever they call him, and as often as they call him, and places himself in their hands, even though they should be his enemies. And after having come, he remains, entirely at their disposal; they move him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut him up in the tabernacle, or expose him on the altar, or carry him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give him for the food of others. "O maxima potestas!" says St. Lawrence Justinian, speaking of priests, "ad eorum pene libitum corpus Christi de panis transubstantiatur materia, descendit de cœlo in carne verbum et altaris reperitur in mensa! Hoc illis erogatur ex gratia quod nusquam datum est angelis. Hi assistunt Deo; illi contrectant manibus, tribunt et in se suscipiunt." —Serm. de Euch., n. 27.

6. With regard to the mystic body of Christ, that is, all the faithful, the priest has the power of the

keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of his priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it: "Tanta sacerdoti potestas," says St. Maximus, "attributa est judicandi ut in arbitrio ejus poneretur cœleste judicium." The sentence of the priest precedes and God subscribes to it: "Præcedit," writes St. Peter Damian, "sententia Petri sententiam redemptoris; Dominus sequitur servum et quicquid hic in inferioribus judicaverit, ille in supernis comprobat."—Serm. 27.

7. Priests are the dispensers of the divine graces and the companions of God: "In domo Dei divinorum bonorum œconomos," says St. Ignatius, Martyr, "socios Dei sacerdotes Dei respicite."—Epist. ad Polycarp. They are the glory and the pillars of the Church, the doors and doorkeepers of heaven: "Ipsi," says St. Prosper, "sunt ecclesiæ decus, columnæ firmissimæ, januæ civitatis, æternæ per quas omnes ingrediuntur ad Christum; ipsi janitores quibus claves datæ sunt regni cœlorum; ipsi dispensatores regiæ domus quorum arbitrio dividuntur gradus singulorum."—Liv. 2, de Vita Contempl., c. 3.

8. Were the Redeemer to descend into a Church, and sit in a confessional to administer the sacrament of penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, *Ego te absolvo*, the priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, *Ego te absolvo*, and the penitents of each would be equally absolved. How great the honour which a king would confer on a subject whom he should empower to rescue from prison as many as he pleased? But far greater is the power which the eternal Father has given to Jesus Christ, and which Jesus Christ has given to his priests, to rescue from hell not only the bodies but also the souls of the faithful: "Omne judicium," says St. Chrysostom, "a filio illis traditum; nam quasi in cœlum translati ad principatum istum perducti sunt. Si cui rex hunc honorem detul-

erit ut potestatem habeat quoscumque in carcerem conjectis laxandi, beatus ille judicio omnium fuerit. At vero qui tanto majorem a Deo accipit potestatem quanto animæ corporibus præstant.—de Sacerd., Lib. 3, c. 5.

9. Thus the sacerdotal dignity is the most noble of all the dignities in this world. "Nihil," says St. Ambrose, "excellentius in hoc sæculo." (de dig. sac. c. 3.) It transcends all the dignities of kings, of emperors, and of angels: "Prætulit vos sacerdotes," says St. Bernard, "regibus et imperatoribus, prætulit angelis."—Ser. ad Past. in Syn. According to St. Ambrose, the dignity of the priest as far exceeds that of kings, as the value of gold surpasses that of lead: "Longe erit inferius quam si plumbum ad aurum compares. Aurum non tam pretiosius plumbo quam regia potestate altior est dignitas sacerdotalis."—De Dig. Sac., c. 2, dist. 36. The reason is, because the power of kings extends only to temporal goods and to the bodies of men, but the power of the priest extends to spiritual goods and to the human soul: "Quanto anima corpore præstantior est," says St. Clement, "tanto est sacerdotium regno excellentius." —Lib. 2, cap. 34. "Habent principes," says St. John Chrysostom, "vinculi potestatem, verum corporum solum; sacerdotes vinculum etiam animarum contingit."—Hom. 5, in Isa.

10. The kings of the earth glory in honouring priests: "Boni principis," says Pope Marcellinus, "est Dei sacerdotes honorare."—In c. Boni Prin., dist. 96. They willingly bend their knee before the priest of God; they kiss his hands, and with bowed down head receive his benediction: "Se reges flexis genibus," says Peter de Blois, "offerunt vobis (sacerdotes) munera, et deosculantur manum et ejus contactu sanctificantur."—Serm. 47. "Major est hic principatus quam regis," says St. Chrysostom, "propterea rex caput submittit manui sacerdotis."—Hom. 4, de Verb. Isa. Baronius relates (anno 325, n. 15,) that when the Empress Eusebia sent for Leontius, Bishop of Tripoli, he said that if she wished to see him, she should consent to two conditions; first, that

on his arrival she should instantly descend from the throne, and bowing down her head, should ask his benediction; secondly, that he should be seated on the throne, and that she should not sit upon it without his permission; he added, that unless she submitted to these conditions, he should never go to the palace. Being invited to the table of the Emperor Miximus, St. Martin in taking a draught, first paid a mark of respect to his chaplain, and then to the emperor. In the Council of Nice, the Emperor Constantine wished to sit in the last place, after all the priests, and on a seat lower than that which they occupied; he would not even sit down without their permission.—Eusebius' Vita Constan., Lib. 3, c. 22. The holy King, St. Boleslans, had so great a veneration for priests, that he would not dare to sit in their presence.

11. According to St. Thomas, the dignity of the Priesthood surpasses even that of the angels, (3 p. q. 22, a. 1, ad 1), and St. Gregory Nazianzen has said that the angels themselves venerate the Priesthood: "Sacordotium ipsi quoque angeli venerantor." All the angels in heaven cannot absolve from a single sin. The angels guardian procure for the souls committed to their care, grace to have recourse to a priest that he may absolve them: "Licet," says St. Peter Damian, "assistant præsidentis (sacerdotis) imperium expectantes, nullus tamen eorum ligandi atque solvendi possidet potestatem."—Serm. 26, de S. Petr. When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his client from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him. After having given the order of Priesthood to a holy ecclesiastic, St. Francis de Sales perceived, that in going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the saint why he stopped, he replied that God favoured him with the visible presence of his angel guardian, who before he had received Priesthood always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest

with the angel that he stopped at the door. St. Francis of Assisium used to say, "If I saw an angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the angel.

12. Besides, the power of a priest surpasses that of most holy Mary; for, although this divine mother can pray for us, and by her prayers, obtain whatever she wishes, still she cannot absolve a Christian from even the smallest sin. "Licet," says Innocent the Third, "Beatissima Virgo excellentior fuit apostolis, non tamen illi sed istis, Dominus claves regni cœlorum commisit."—C. Nova Quædam de pœn. rem. St. Bernardine of Sienna, has written: "Holy Virgin excuse me, for I speak not against you: the Lord has raised the Priesthood above you." "Virgo benedicta, excusa me, quia non loquor contra te; sacerdotium ipse prætulit supra te."—Tom. 1, Serm. 20, art. 2, cap. 7. The saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the Priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the eucharist, the priest (as it were) conceives him as often as he wishes, so that if the person of the Redeemer had not as yet been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the words of consecration, would produce this great person of a Man-God. "O veneranda sacerdotum dignitas," says St. Augustine, "in quorum manibus Dei filius, veluti in utero virginis incarnatur."—Hom. 2, in Ps. 37.

13. Hence, Priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ: such the title which St. Bernard gives them. "Parentes Christi."—Serm. ad Past. in Syn. For, they are the active cause by which he is made to exist really in the consecrated host: thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the sacrament, by giving him a sacramental existence; and produces him as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. As in creating the world, it was sufficient for God to have said—let it be made, and it was created—"Quoniam ipse dixit et facta sunt."—Ps. xxxii. 9, and Ps. cxlviii. 5—so it is sufficient for the priest to say, "*Hoc est*

corpus meum," and behold the bread is no longer bread, but the body of Jesus Christ. "Potestas sacerdotis," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "est sicut potestas divinarum personarum: quia in panis transubstantiatione tanta requiritur virtus quanta in mundi creatione." Loco supra citato. And St. Augustine has written, "O venerabilis sanctitudo manuum! O felix exercitium! Qui creavit me (si fas est dicere) dedit mihi creare se; et qui creavit me sine me, ipse creavit se mediante me."—(In Ps. 37.) As the word of God created heaven and earth, so (says St. Jerome,) the words of the priest create Jesus Christ. "Ad nutum Domini de nihilo substiterunt excelsa cœlorum, vasta terrarum: ita parem potentiam sacramenti verbis præbet virtus."—Serm. de corp. Christi. The dignity of the priest is so great, that he even blesses Jesus Christ on the altar as a victim to be offered to the eternal Father. In the sacrifice of the mass, writes Father Mansi, Jesus Christ is the principal offerer and victim; as minister, he blesses the priest, but as victim, the priest blesses him. (tr. 22. disc. 12. n. 6.)

14. The greatness of the dignity of a priest, is also estimated from the high place which he occupies. The Priesthood is called the seat of the saints. "Locus sanctorum."—Syn. Carnot. a. 1550. Priests are called Vicars of Jesus Christ, because they hold his place on earth. "Vos estis," says St. Augustine, "vicarii Christi, quia vicem ejus geritis."—Serm. 36. ad Fratr. In the Council of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, called priests, the representatives of the person of God on earth: "Dei personam in terris gerentes." And before him, the apostle said: "For Christ we are ambassadors, God, "as it were, exhorting by us."—2 Cor. v. 20. When he ascended into heaven, Jesus Christ left his priests after him, to hold on earth, his place of mediator between God and men, particularly on the altar. "Accedat sacerdos," says St. Laurence, Justinian, "ad altaris tribunal, ut Christus." According to St. Cyprian, a priest on the altar performs the office of Christ. "Sacerdos in altari vice Christi fungitur."—St. Cyprian. When,

says Chrysostom, you have seen a priest offering sacrifice, consider that the hand of Christ is invisibly extended. "Cum videris sacerdotem offerentem, consideres Christi manum invisibiliter extensam."—Hom. 69, ad pop. Ant.

15. The priest holds the place of the Saviour himself, when, by saying, "*Ego te absolvo*," he absolves from sin. This great power which Jesus Christ has received from his eternal Father, he has communicated to his priests. Jesus, says Tertullian, "De suo vestiens sacerdotes." To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. "Deus qui omnipotentiam tuam, (says the holy church,) parcendo maxime et miserendo manifestas," &c. Hence, when they heard that Jesus Christ pardoned the sins of the paralytic, the Jews justly said: "Quis potest dimittere peccata nisi solus Deus." But what God alone can do by his omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying, "*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis:*" for, the forms of the sacraments, or the words of the forms, produce what they signify. How great should be our wonder, if we saw a person invested with the power of changing a negro into a white man; but the priest does what is far more wonderful, for by saying "*Ego te absolvo*," he changes the sinner from an enemy into the friend of God, and from the slave of hell, into an heir of paradise.

16. Cardinal Hugo, represents the Lord addressing the following words to a priest who absolves a sinner, 1 Cor. 3. *Ego feci cœlum et terram; verumtamen meliorem et nobiliorem creationem do tibi: fac novam animam quæ est in peccato.*" *Novam animam*, that is, make the slave of Lucifer become my child. *Ego feci ut terra produceret fructus suos; do tibi meliorem creationem; ut anima fructus suos producat.* The soul without grace is a withered tree which can no longer produce fruit; but receiving the divine grace, through the ministry of a priest, she brings forth fruits of eternal life. St. Augustine says, that to sanctify a sinner, is a greator work than to create heaven and earth. "Majus opus est ex impio justum facere quam creare cœlum et terram." "And hast

thou" (says Job,) "an arm like God, and canst thou thunder with a voice like him?"—Job. xl. iv. Who is it that has an arm like the arm of God, and thunders with a voice like the thundering voice of God? It is the priest, who, in giving absolution, exerts the arm and voice of God, by which he rescues souls from hell.

17. According to St. Ambrose, a priest, in absolving a sinner, performs the very office of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls. "Munus Spiritus Sancti officium sacerdotis." Hence, in giving priests the power of absolving from sin, the Redeemer "breathed on them, and said to them, receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—John, xx. 22-23. He gave them his own spirit, that is the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier of souls, and thus made them, according to the words of the apostle, his own coadjutors. "We are God's coadjutors."—1 Cor. iii. 9. "Principatum divini judicii sortiuntur," says St. Gregory, "ut jure Dei quibusdam peccata retineant, quibusdam relaxent." St. Clement, then, had reason to say, that the priest is, as it were, a God on earth. "Post deum terrenus Deus." "God," said David, "stood in the congregation of the gods."—Ps. lxxxi. 1. These gods are, according to St. Augustine, the priests of God, "Dii excelsi, in quorum synagoga Deus deorum stare desiderat."—Serm. 36, ad Presb. ad erem. Innocent the Third, has written, "Sccerdotes propter officii dignitatum deorum nomine nuncupantur."—In can. Cum ex juncto de hær.

18. How great, then, says St. Ambrose, the deordination, to see in the same person, the highest dignity, and a life of scandal! a divine profession, and wicked conduct! "Ne sit honor sublimis et vita deformis: deifica professio et illicita actio. Actio respondeat nomini."—De dign. sacerd. cap. 2. What, says Salvian, is a sublime dignity conferred on a unworthy person, but a gem enchased in mire? "Quid est dignitas indignis humeris posita nisi gemma luti superstrata?—Lib. 2, ad Eccles. Cath.

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19. "Neither doth any man," says St. Paul, "take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was. For Christ did not glorify himself that he might be made a high priest; but he that said unto him: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."—Heb. v. 4, &c. Let no one, he says, dare to ascend to the Priesthood, without first receiving, as Aaron did, the divine call: for, even Jesus Christ would not, of himself, assume the honour of the Priesthood, but waited till his Father called him to it. From this, we may infer the greatness of the sacerdotal dignity. But, the greater its sublimity, the more it should be dreaded. "Grandis dignitas sacerdotalis," says St. Jerome, "sed grandis ruina eorum si peccant. Lætemur ad ascensum, sed timeamus ad lapsum."—Lib. 3, in Ezech, ad c. 44. St. Gregory said: "Ingrediuntur electi sacerdotum manibus expiati cœlestem patriam, et sacerdotes, ad inferni supplicia festinant." The saint compares priests to the baptisimal water which cleanses the baptised from their sins, and sends them to heaven, "et ipsa in cloacas descendit."—Hom. 17, in Evang.

SECOND CHAPTER.

On the End of the Priesthood.

St. Cyprian said, that all who had the true spirit of God, were, when compelled to take the order of Priesthood, seized with fear and trembling, as if they saw an enormous weight placed on their shoulders, by which they were in danger of being crushed to death. "Reperio omnes sanctos divini ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes."—Epis. ad cler. Rom. St. Epiphanius writes, that he found no one willing to be ordained a priest. A council, held in Carthage, ordained that they who were considered worthy, and refused to be ordained, might be compelled to take Priesthood. St. Gregory Nazianzen, says: "Nemo læto animo creatur sacerdos." In his life of

St. Cyprian, Paul, the Deacon, states that when the Saint heard that his bishop intended to ordain him priest, he, through humility, concealed himself. It is related in the life of St. Fulgentius, that he too fled away and hid himself. "Vota populi velociori fuga præveniens, latebris incertis absconditur." St. Athanasius, also, as Sozomen relates, took flight in order to escape the Priesthood. St. Ambrose, as he himself attests, resisted for a long time before he consented to be ordained, "Quam resistebam ne ordinarer!" St. Gregory, even after it was made manifest, by miracles, that God wished him to be a priest, concealed himself under the garb of a merchant, in order to prevent his ordination.

2. To avoid being ordained, St. Ephrem feigned madness; St. Mark cut of his thumb; St. Ammonius cut off his ears and nose, and because the people insisted on his ordination, he threatened to cut out his tongue, and thus they ceased to molest him. It is known to all, that St. Francis remained a deacon, and refused to ascend to the Priesthood, because he learned, by revelation, that the soul of a priest should be as pure as the water which was shown to him in a chrystal vessel. The Abbot Theodore, was only a deacon, but he would not exercise the order he had received, because, during prayer, he was shown a pillar of fire, and heard the following words: "if you have a heart as inflamed as this pillar, you may then exercise your order." The Abbot Motues was a priest, but always refused to offer the holy mass, saying, that he had been compelled to take holy orders, and that because he felt himself unworthy, he could not celebrate. Formerly, there were but few priests among the monks, whose lives were so austere; and the monk who aspired to the Priesthood was considered to be a proud man. Hence, to try the obedience of one of his monks, St. Basil commanded him to ask, in public, the order of Priesthood; his compliance was regarded as an act of heroic obedience, because, by his obedience in asking to be ordained priest, he, as it were, declared himself to be a man filled with the spirit of pride.

3. But how, I ask, does it happen that the saints, who live only to God, resist their ordination through a sense of their unworthiness, and that some run blindly to the Priesthood, and rest not until they attain it by lawful or unlawful means? Ah! unhappy men! says St. Bernard, to be registered among the priests of God, shall be, for them, the same as to be enrolled on the catalogue of the damned. And why? Because such persons are generally called to the Priesthood, not by God, but by relatives, by interest, or ambition. Thus they enter into the house of God, not through the motive which a priest should have, but through worldly motives. Behold why the faithful are abandoned, the Church dishonoured, so many souls perish, and with them such priests are also damned.

4. God wills that all men be saved, but not in the same way. As in heaven, he has distinguished different degrees of glory, so on earth, he has established different states of life, as so many different ways of gaining heaven. On account of the great ends for which it has been instituted, the Priesthood is, of all these, the most noble, the most exalted and sublime. What are these ends? Perhaps the sole ends of the Priesthood are to say mass, and to recite the office, and then to live like seculars. No, the end for which God has instituted the Priesthood, has been to appoint, on earth, public persons to watch over the honour of his divine majesty, and to procure the salvation of souls. "For every high priest," says St. Paul, "taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err." —Heb. v. 1. "To execute the office of the Priesthood and to have praise."...Ecc. xlv. 19. "That is," says Cardinal Hugo, "to perform the office of praising God," ad fungendum officio laudandi Deum." And Cornelius a Lapide, says: Sicut angelorum est perpetuo laudare Deum in cœlis, sic sacerdotum est eundem jugiter laudare in terris."

5. Jesus Christ has made priests, as it were, his

co-operators in procuring the honour of his Eternal Father, and the salvation of souls, and therefore, when he ascended into heaven, he protested that he left them to hold his place, and to continue the work of redemption which he had undertaken and consummated. "Veluti amoris sui vicarios," says St. Ambrose, "Comment. in c. ult Lucæ." And Jesus Christ himself said to his disciples: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."—John, xx. 21. I leave you to perform the very office for which I came into the world; that is, to make known to men the name of my Father. And addressing his Eternal Father, he said: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; I have manifested thy name to the men," &c.—Jo. xvii. 4. He then prayed for his priests: "I have given them thy word.....Sanctify them in truth.....As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them."—Ibid xiv. 17, 18. Thus, priests are placed in the world to make known to men, God and his perfections, his justice and mercy, his commands, and to procure the respect, obedience and love which he deserves. They are appointed to seek the lost sheep, and when necessary, to give their lives for them. This is the end for which Jesus Christ has come on earth, for which he has constituted priests: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."

6. Jesus came into the world for no other purpose than to light up the fire of divine love. "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled."—Luke, xii. 49. And the priest must labour during his whole life, and with his whole strength, not to acquire riches, honours, and worldly goods, but to inspire all with the love of God. "Ideo," says the author of the Imperfect Work, "vocati sumus a Christo non ut operemur quæ ad nostrum pertinent usum, sed quæ ad gloriam Dei...Verus amor non quærit quæ sua sunt, sed ad libitum amati cuncta desiderat perficere."—Hom. 34, in Mat. In the Book of Leviticus, the Lord says to his priests: "I have separated you from other people, that you should be mine."—Ib. xx. 26. Mark the words, "*that you*

should be mine;" that you may be employed in my praises, devoted to my service, and to my love: "The co-operators and dispensers of my sacraments," says St. Peter Damian. Opusc. 8. "*Mine,*" that you may be the guides and the rulers of the flock of Christ. "Vos estis" says Peter, Blessensis, "duces et rectores gregis Christi."—Epis. 1. "*Mine,*" for, according to St. Ambrose, the minister of the altar belongs not to himself, but to God. "Verus altaris minister Deo, non sibi natus est." The Lord separates his priests from the rest of his people, in order to unite them entirely to himself. "Is it a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from all the people, and joined you to himself."—Num. xvi. 9.

7. "If," said the Redeemer, "any man minister unto me, let him follow me."—John, xii. 26. "*Let him follow me;*" he should follow Jesus Christ, by shunning the world, by assisting souls, by promoting the love of God, and extirpating vice. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee, have fallen upon me."—Ps. lxviii. 10. The priest, who is a true follower of Jesus Christ, regards injuries done to God as offered to himself. Seculars, devoted to the world, cannot render to God the veneration and the gratitude which are due to him: hence, says a learned author, it has been necessary to select certain persons, that by the fulfilment of their peculiar office and obligations, they may give due honour to the Lord. "Fuit necessarium aliquos e populo seligi ac destinari qui ad impendendum debitum Deo cultum ex sui status obligatione et institutione intenderent."—Claudius Frassen, Tom. 12, Tract. 3, d. 1, Art. 1. Quæst. 1.

8. In every government ministers are appointed to enforce the observance of the laws, to remove scandals, to repress the seditious, and to defend the honour of the king. For all these ends, the Lord has constituted priests, the officers of his court. Hence St. Paul has said: "Let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God."—2 Cor. vi. 4. Ministers of state always endeavour to procure the respect due to their sovereign, and to extend his glories: they always

speak of him in terms of praise, and should they hear a word against their master, with what zeal do they reprove the author of it. They study to gratify his inclinations, and even expose their life in order to please him. Is it thus that priests act for God? It is certain that they are his ministers of state: by them are managed all the interests of his glory. Through them sins should be removed from the world: this is the end for which Jesus Christ has died. "Crucifixus est ut destruatur corpus peccati."—Rom. vi. 6. But, on the day of judgment, how can the judge acknowledge, as his true minister, the priest, who, instead of preventing the sins of others, is the first to conspire against Jesus Christ? What would you say of ministers who should nelglect to attend to the interests of their sovereign, and should refuse to assist him when he stood in need of their aid? But what would you say, if these ministers also spoke against their master, and endeavoured to deprive him of his throne, by entering into an alliance with his enemies.

9. Priests are the ambassadors of God, says the Apostle: "For Christ we are ambassadors."—2 Cor. v. 20. They are his coadjutors in procuring the salvation of souls. "Dei adjutores."—1 Cor. iii. For this end, Jesus Christ gave them the Holy Ghost, that they might save souls by remitting their sins. "He breathed on them, and he said to them: receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."—John, xx. 22. Hence, Hubert has written, that the essence of the Priesthood consists in seeking, ardently to procure, first, the glory of God, and then the salvation of souls. "Essentia sacerdotii consistit in ardenti studio promovendi gloriam Dei, et salutem proximi."—Tom, 7, p. 7, c. 5, q. 2.

10. The business, then, of every priest, is to attend, not to the things of the world, but to the things of God. "Constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum."—Heb. v. 1. Hence, St. Silvester ordained that, for ecclesiastics, the days of the week should be called *Feriæ*, or vacant days. "Quotidie clericus, abjecta cæterarum rerum cura, uni Deo vacare debet."—In

festo. Silv. Lect. Brev. By this, he meant, that we, who are ordained priests, should seek nothing but God, and the salvation of souls, an office which St. Denis called, a most divine office. "Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari in salutem animarum." St. Antonine says, that the meaning of *sacerdos* is *sacra docens*. And Honorius Augustoduni says, that *presbyter* signifies *præbens iter*. Hence St. Ambrose calls priests, *the guides and rectors of the flock of Christ*. "Duces et rectores gregis Christi." And St. Peter, calls ecclesiastics, "a kingly Priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people."—1 Pet. ii. 9. A people destined to acquire, not riches, but souls. St. Ambrose, calls the sacerdotal office, "*Officium quæstus non pecuniarum sed animarum.*"—In cap. 1, Isa. Even the Gentiles wished their priests to attend only to the worship of their gods, and therefore they would not permit them to hold the office of secular magistrates.

11. Hence, speaking of priests, St. Gregory says, with tears, it is our duty to abandon all earthly business in order to attend to the things of God, but we do the very contrary. "Dei causas relinquimus et ad terrena negotia vacamus." After being appointed by God, to attend only to the advancement of his glory, Moses spent his time in settling the disputes of the people. Jethro rebuked him for his conduct, saying: "Thou art spent with foolish labour.....Be thou to the people in the things that pertain to God."—Exod. xviii. 18, 19. But what should Jethro say, if he saw our priests employed in mercantile affairs, acting as the servants of seculars, or occupied in making matches, but forgetful of the works of God; if, in a word, he saw them seeking, as St. Prosper says, "to advance in wealth, but not in virtue, and to acquire greater honours, but not greater sanctity."... Lib. 1. de vit. con. c. 2. Oh! what an abuse, exclaims Father M. Avila, to make heaven subordinate to earth!" "What a misery," says St. Gregory, "to see so many priests seeking, not the merits of virtue, but the goods of this life." "Non virtutum merita sed subsidia vitæ præsentis exquirunt."—Mor. lib. ii.

c. 17. Hence in the very works of their ministry, they regard not the glory of God, but the retribution annexed to them. "Ad stipendia," says St. Isidore, "duntaxat oculos habent."—S. Isid. Pelus. lib. 2, ep. 142.

Many other things, which might be added to this chapter, are omitted, because they are contained in the following chapter, which treats of the offices of a priest.

THIRD CHAPTER.

On the Sanctity necessary for a priest.

1. Great is the dignity of the Priesthood, but great, also, are its obligations. Priests ascend to a great height, but in their ascent they must be assisted by great virtue; otherwise, instead of meriting a reward, they shall be reserved for severe chastisement. "Magna dignitas," says St. Laurence Justinian, "sed magnum est pondus. In alto gradu positi, oportet quoque ut in virtutum culmine sint erecti: alioquin, non ad meritum, sed ad proprium præsunt judicium."—De instit. præl. c. 11. And St. Peter Chrysologus says: "Sacerdotes honorati: dicam autem onerati." The honour of the Priesthood is great, but its burden is also great; great, too, is the account which priests have to render to God. "Non dignitas," says St. Jerome, "sed opus dignitatis salvare convenit." Priests are saved, not by their dignity, but by works suited to their dignity.

2. Every Christian should be perfect and holy, because every Christian professes to serve a God of holiness. "Hoc enim est," says St. Leo, "christianum esse, nimirum, terreni hominis imagine deposita, cœlestem formam induere."—Ser. 24, de Pass. Hence, Jesus Christ has said: "Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect."—Mat. v. 48. But the sanctity of the priest should be very different from that of seculars. "Nihil in sacerdote,"

says St. Ambrose, "commune cum multitudine."—Epis. 6, ad Iren. And the saint adds, that as greater grace is given to the priest, so his life should be more holy than that of seculars: "Vita sacerdotis præponderare debet sicut præponderat gratia."—Lib. 3, Epist. 25. And St. Isidore says, that between the sanctity of a priest and a good secular, the difference should be as great as between heaven and earth: "Tantum inter sacerdotem et quemlibet probum interesse debet, quantum inter cœlum et terram discriminis est."—Isid. Pelus. Lib. 2, ep. 205. St. Thomas teaches, that every one is obliged to practice what is suited to the state which he has chosen: "Quicumque profitetur statum aliquem tenetur ad ea quæ illi statui conveniunt." And according to St. Augustine, a man, by entering the ecclesiastical state, imposes on himself the obligation of being holy: "Clericus duo professus est: sanctitatem et clericatum."...Serm. 83, de divers. And Cassiodorus, calls the clerical profession, a heavenly life: "Professio clericorum vita cœlestis." The priest is, as Thomas a Kempis says, bound to greater perfection than all others: "Sacerdos ad majorem tenetur perfectionem:" because the priesthood is the most sublime of all states. Salvian adds, that in things in which God counsels perfection to seculars, he makes it imperative on ecclesiastics: "Clericis suis, Salvator non ut cæteris voluntarium, sed imperativum officium perfectionis inducit."...Lib. 2, de Eccl. Cath.

3. The priests of the Old Law carried on their forehead a plate on which was engraved *Sanctum Domino*, that they might be reminded of the sanctity which they should profess. The victims offered by the priests should be entirely consumed. And why? "Ut," says Theodoret, "integritas sacerdotis monstraretur, qui se Deo dicaverat."—Qu. 3. in Levit. St. Ambrose says, that to offer sacrifice worthily, the priest ought first to sacrifice himself by the oblation of his whole being to God: "Hoc enim est sacrificium primitivum quando unusquisque offert hostiam, et a se incipit, ut postea munus suum possit offerre."—De Abel., cap. 6. And Eusebius has written, that from

youth till death, the priest should be a perfect holocaust of perfection: "Sacerdos continuum esse debet perfectionis holocaustum, ut incipiens a perfecta sapientia in mane juventutis, in eadem vespere vitæ suæ finiat." Hence God said to the priests of the Old Law, "I have separated you from other people, that you should be mine."—Levit. xx, 26. Now, in the New Law, the Lord commands his priests far more strictly to abstain from worldly business, that they may labour only to please that God to whom they have dedicated themselves. "No man," says St. Paul, "being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular business, that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself."—2 Tim. ii, 4. And the holy Church requires of those who enter the sanctuary, by taking the first tonsure, to promise that they shall not engage in secular pursuits, and to declare that thenceforward they will have no other inheritance than the Lord: "Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ et calicis mei; tu es qui restitues hæreditatem meam mihi." St. Jerome says, that the clerical dress, the very state calls for, and demands, sanctity of life: "Clamat vestis clericalis, clamat status professi animi sanctitatem."—Epis. 58. Thus, the priest should keep not only at a distance from every vice, but should also make continual efforts to arrive at perfection. In this consists, according to St. Bernard, the perfection which can be attained in this life: "Jugis conatus ad perfectionem perfectio reputatur."—Ep. 253, ad Abb. Guarin.

4. St. Bernard weeps at the sight of so many who run to holy orders without considering the sanctity necessary for those who wish to ascend to such a height: "Curritur passim ad sacros ordines sine consideratione." St. Ambrose says, "Quæramus quis potest dicere; portio mea Dominus, et non libido, divitiæ, vanitas." St. John the Evangelist writes: "Who hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and his Father."—Apoc. i. 6. In explaining the word *kingdom*, Menochius Gagneus and Tirinus say, that priests are the kingdom of God; first, because in them God reigns in this life by grace, and in the

next by glory: "In quo deus regnat, nunc per gratiam, postea per gloriam." Secondly, because they are made kings to reign over vice: "fecit nos reges; regnamus enim cum ipso et imperamus vitiis." St. Gregory says, that the priest ought to be dead to the world and to all the passions, in order to lead a life altogether divine: "Necesse est ut (sacerdos) mortuus omnibus passionibus, vivat vita divina."—Past., part 1, cap. 10. The present priesthood is the same as that which Jesus Christ has received from his Father: "And the glory which thou hast given to me, I have given to them."—John xvii. 22. Since then, says St. Chrysostom, the priest represents Jesus Christ, he ought to have as much purity as would entitle him to stand in the midst of the angels: "Necesse est sacerdotem sic esse purum ut in cœlis collocatus inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret."

5. St. Paul requires that the priest should be irreprehensible: "Oportet . . . . . episcopum irreprehensibilem esse."—1 Tim. iii. 2. In the word *bishop*, the apostle certainly includes priests; for from bishops he passes to deacons, without making mention of priests: "Diaconos similiter pudicos," &c. Hence he intended to comprehend them under the word bishop. This passage is understood in this sense by St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, who in speaking on this point says, "Quæ de episcopis dixit, etiam sacerdotibus congruit." Now the word *irreprehensibilem*, every one knows, implies the possession of all virtues: "Omnes virtutes comprehendit," says St. Jerome.—Epis. 83. And in explaining this word, Cornelius a Lapide says, "Qui non tantum vitio careat, sed qui omnibus virtutibus sit ornatus."

6. For eleven centuries, all who fell into mortal sin after baptism, were excluded from the priesthood. This we learn from the Council of Nice, can. 10, from the Council of Toledo, can. 30, from the Council of Illiberis, can. 76, and from the Fourth Council of Carthage, can. 68. And if a priest after his ordination had fallen into sin, he was deposed, and shut up in a monastery, as may be observed from several canons—See Dist. 88, from can. 3 to 13. In the

sixth canon, the following reason is assigned: "Qui sancti non sunt, sancta tractare non debent. Nonnisi quod irreprehensibile est sancta defendit ecclesia." And in the 44th canon of the Council of Carthage we read: "Clerici, quibus pars est Dominus, a sæculi societate segregati vivunt." The Council of Trent declared, "Decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos vitam moresque componere ut habitu, gestu, sermone, aliis rebus nil nisi grave ac religione plenum, præseferant."—Sess. 22, c. 1, de ref. In ecclesiastics the Council requires sanctity in dress as well as in conduct, language, and every action. St. Chrysostom says, that priests should be so holy that all may look to them as models of sanctity; because God has placed them on earth that they may live like angels, and be luminaries and teachers of virtue to all others: "Sacerdos debet habere vitam immaculatam, ut omnes in illum, veluti in aliquod exemplar excellens, intueantur. Idcirco enim nos elegit, ut simus quasi luminaria, et magistri cæterorum, et veluti angeli versemur in terris."—Hom. 10, in Tim. 3. The word *ecclesiastic*, according to St. Jerome, signifies a person who has taken God for his inheritance. "Clericus," says St. Augustine, "interpretetur primum vocabulum suum, et nitatur esse quod dicitur."—In Ps. 66. Let ecclesiastics understand the signification of their name, and live according to it; and since God is their portion, let them live for God alone. "Cui Deus portio est," says St. Ambrose, "nihil debet curare nisi Deum."—S. Ambr., lib. 2, de fuga sæc., c. 2.

7. The priest is a minister destined by God for two most noble and exalted offices: to honour him by sacrifices and to sanctify souls: "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God."—Hebr. v, 1. On this passage St. Thomas writes, "Omnis pontifex constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, non propter gloriam, non propter divitias." Every priest is chosen by the Lord, and placed in the world to labour not to acquire wealth nor applause, nor to indulge in amusements, nor to advance his family, but only to promote

the interests of God's glory. "*He is ordained for the things that appertain to God.*" Hence, in the Scriptures, the priest is called a man of God: *homo Dei.* —1 Tim. vi, 11. A man who belongs not to the world, nor to relatives, nor to himself, but to God alone, and who seeks nothing but God. Hence to priests should be applied the words of David: "This is the generation of them that seek him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob."—Ps. xxiii, 6. Behold the generation that seek God alone! As in heaven God has appointed certain angels to assist at his throne, so on earth, among men, he has destined priests to procure his glory. Hence he says to them, "Separavi vos a cæteris populis ut essetis mei."—Levit. xx, 26. St. Chrysostom writes: "Therefore has God chosen us, that like angels we may live with men on earth."—Hom. 10, in cap. 1, Tim. And God himself says, "I will be sanctified in them that approach to me."—Levit. x, 3. "That is," adds the commentator, "my sanctity shall be shown forth by the sanctity of my ministers."

8. St. Thomas says, that greater sanctity is required in a priest than in religious, on account of the most sublime functions of his ministry, particularly in the oblation of the sacrifice of the Mass: "Quia per sacrum ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria quibis ipsi Christo servitur in sacramento altaris: ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status."—2, 2 q. 184, a. 8. "Unde gravius peccat," adds the holy Doctor "cæteris paribus, clericus in sacris ordinibus constitutus, si aliquid contrarium sanctitati agat quam aliquis religiosus qui non habet ordinem sacrum." Listen to the celebrated maxim of St. Augustine: "Vix bonus monachus bonum clericum facit." Hence no one can be called a good ecclesiastic unless he surpasses a good monk in virtue.

9. "Verus minister altaris," says St. Ambrose, "qui Deo, non sibi, natus est." That is, a priest should disregard his conveniencies, his interests, and amusements; he should consider that from the day he has received the priesthood, he belongs not to him-

self but to God; and should attend only to the interests of God. The Lord evidently wishes his priests to be pure and holy; that being cleansed from every defect, they may approach the altar to offer sacrifice to him. "And," says the Prophet Malachy, "he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices to the Lord in justice."—Mal. iii. 3. In the book of Leviticus he says: "They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane his name; for they offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, and the bread of their God, and therefore they shall be holy."—xxi. 6. The priests of the Old Law, then, were commanded to be holy, because they offered to God incense and the loaves of proposition which were but a figure of the most holy Sacrament of the altar. How much greater should be the purity and sanctity of the priests of the New Law who offer to God the immaculate Lamb, his own very Son? Estius says that we do not offer calves or incense, as the priests of the Old Law did: "Sed ipsum corpus Domini quod in ara crucis pependit. Adeoque sanctitas requiritur, quæ sita est in puritate animi, sine qua quisquis accedit, immundus accedit." Hence Bellarmine says, "Væ miseris nobis qui, ministerium altissimum sortiti, tam procul absumus a fervore quem Deus in umbraticis sacerdotibus exigebat."—In Ps. i, 31.

1°. The Lord commanded even those who carried the sacred vessels to be free from all stain: "Be ye clean, you who carry the vessels of the Lord."—Isaias, lii. 11. How much greater should be the purity of priests who carry Jesus Christ in their hands and in their breasts? "Quanto puriores," says Peter de Blois, "esse oportet qui in manibus et corpore portant Christum!"—Epist. 125, ad Rich. And St. Augustine says, "Oportet mundum esse qui non solum vasa aurea debet tractare, sed etiam illa in quibus Domini mors exercetur." The Blessed Virgin Mary should be holy and free from all stain, because she was to carry in her womb, and to treat as a mother, the Incarnate Word. "Why, then," says

St. John Chrysostom, "should not sanctity shine forth with greater splendour than the sun, in the hand that touches the flesh of a God? in the mouth that is filled with celestial fire? and in the tongue that is purpled with the blood of Jesus Christ?" "Quo solari radio non splendidiorem oportet esse manum carnem hanc dividentem, os quod igne spirituali repletur, lingua quæ tremendo nimis sanguine rubescit?"—Hom. 6, ad pop. Ant. The priest on the altar holds the place of Jesus Christ. "He should, then," says St. Laurence Justinian, "approach the altar to offer sacrifice like Jesus Christ; imitating as much as possible the purity and sanctity of Jesus Christ." "Accedat ut Christus, ministret ut sanctus." How great the sanctity which a confessor requires in a nun, in order to permit her to communicate every day? And why is not the same perfection required in a priest who celebrates every morning?

11. "It must be confessed," says the Council of Trent, "that man can perform no action more holy than the celebration of mass:" "Necessarium fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum et divinum tractari posse quam hoc tremendum mysterium."—Sess. 22, decr. de observ. fest. Hence, the holy Council adds, that priests should be most careful to offer this holy sacrifice with the greatest possible purity of conscience: "Satis apparet omnem operam in eo esse ponendam ut quanta maxime fieri potest interiori cordis munditia peragatur." "But," says St. Augustine, "what a horrible thing to hear the tongue which calls down the Son of God from heaven to earth, speaking against God; and to see the hands which are bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ, polluted with the filthiness of sin:" "Lingua quæ vocat de cœlo filium Dei, contra Deum loquitur: et manus quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi polluuntur sanguine peccati."—Apud. Molin. Instruct. sac.

12. If God required so much purity in those who were to offer the sacrifice of animals, and of bread; and, if he forbid these oblations to be made by him who had any blemish: "Qui habuerit maculam non offeret panes Deo suo."—Levit. xxi. 17: "how much

greater purity," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "is required in those who have to offer to God his own Son, the divine Lamb!" "Si tanta sanctitas requirebatur in sacerdotibus qui sacrificabant boves et oves, quid, quæso, requiritur in sacerdotibus qui sacrificant divinum Agnum!"—In Ps. x. 9. St. Thomas says, that the word "*macula*" includes every defect: "Qui est aliquo vitio irretitus non debet ad ministerium ordinis admitti."—Suppl. qu. 36, a. 1. In the Old Law, the blind, &c., were forbidden to offer sacrifice. "Neither shall he approach to minister to him, if he be blind, if he be lame, if he be crookbacked, if he have a continual scab."—Lev. xxi. 18-20. Understanding the preceding defects, in a spiritual sense, the holy fathers say, that the *blind*, that is, they who shut their eyes to the light of God: the *lame*, that is, slothful priests, who never advance in the way of God, and live always with the same defects, without mental prayer, and without recollection; the *crookbacked*, who are, by worldly attachments, always bent down to the earth, to riches, to empty honours, and worldly amusements; and the *scabious*, that is, the voluptuous, who always wallow in sensual pleasures, "Sus lota in volutabro luti"—2 Pet. ii. 22, are unfit to offer sacrifice: in a word, that he who is not holy, is unworthy to approach the altar, because, by the stains which he brings with him, he contaminates the sanctuary of God. Let him not "approach the altar, because he hath a blemish, and he must not defile my sanctuary."—Livit. xxi. 23.

13. The priest should be holy, because he holds the office of dispenser of the sacraments: "Oportet . . . . sine crimine esse, sicut Dei dispensatorem"—Tit. i. 7; and also, because he is a mediator between God and sinners. "Medius stat sacerdos," says St. John Chrysostom, "inter Deum et naturam humanam; illinc beneficia ad nos deferens, et nostras petitiones illi proferens, Dominum iratum reconcilians, et nos eripiens ex illius manibus."—Hom. 5, in Jo. Through priests, God communicates his grace to the faithful in the sacraments. Through them he makes us his children, and saves us by baptism: "Nisi quis rena-

tus fuerit, denuo, non potest uidere regnum Dei."—Jo. iii. 3. Through them he heals the infirm, and even resuscitates, by the sacrament of penance, sinners who are dead to divine grace. Through them, he nourishes souls, and preserves in them the life of divine grace, by means of the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Nisi manducaveritis carnem meam . . . non habebitis vitam in vobis."—Jo. vi. 54. Through them, he gives strength to the dying, to overcome the temptations of hell, by means of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. In a word, St. Chrysostom says that without priests we cannot be saved: "Sine his salutis compotes fieri non possumus."—Lib. 3, de Sacerd., c. 4. By St. Prosper priests are called *judges of the divine will:* "Divinæ voluntatis judices;" by St. Chrysostom, *the walls of the Church:* "Muros ecclesiæ;" by St. Ambrose, *the camps of sanctity:* "Castra sanctitatis," and by St. Gregory Nazianzen, *the foundations of the world, and the pillars of the faith:* "Mundi fundamenta, et fidei columnæ." Hence St. Jerome says that the priest by the power of his sanctity has to carry the weight of all the sins of the world: "Sacerdos onus totius orbis portat humeris sanctitatis." Oh! what a tremendous weight! "And the priest shall pray for him, and for his sin before the Lord . . . and the sin shall be forgiven."—Levit. xix. 22. It is on this account, that the holy Church obliges priests to recite the office every day, and to celebrate mass at least several times in the year. St. Ambrose says that priests should never cease by night or by day to pray for the people: Sacerdotes die ac nocte pro plebe sibi commissa oportet orare."

14. But, to obtain graces for others, the priest must be holy. "Qui sunt medii inter Deum et plebem," says St. Thomas, "debent bona conscientia nitere quoad Deum, et bona fama quoad homines."—Suppl. q. 36, art. 1, ad 2. St. Gregory says that it would be temerity in a mediator to present himself before a prince to ask pardon for rebels, if he himself stood charged with the guilt of treason. "Quantæ hoc audaciæ est," says St. Gregory, "quod apud Deum

locum intercessoris obtineo, cui me familiarem esse per vitæ meritum non agnosco."—Pastor., part 1. They who wish to intercede for another, must stand high in the estimation of the king; for should they be objects of his hatred, their intercession will only increase the indignation of the sovereign: "Cum is qui displicet," continues the saint, "ad intercedendum mittitur, irati animus ad deteriora provocatur." Hence, according to St. Augustine, the priest must have such merit before God that he may be able to obtain for the people what they, on account of their demerits, cannot hope to receive: "Talem oportet esse Domini sacerdotem ut, quod populus per se non valet apud Dominum, ipse sacerdos mereatur impetrare." And Pope Hormisdas has said, "Sanctiorem esse convenit toto populo quem necesse est orare pro populo."—In Can. Non Negamus, dist. 61. But St. Bernard says, with tears, "Behold, the world is full of priests, and still there are but few mediators—Ecce mundus sacerdotibus plenus est, et rarus invenitur mediator." Yes: for few priests are holy and worthy of being mediators. Speaking of bad ecclesiastics, St. Augustine says: "Plus placet Deo latratus canum quam oratio talium sacerdotium." Father Marchese in his "Diario Dominicano," writes that when a servant of God of the Order of St. Dominick, implored the Lord to have pity on the people through the merits of priests, He said to her that, by their sins, priests provoked rather than appeased his anger.

15. Priests should be holy; because God has placed them in the world as models of virtue. They are called by St. John Chrysostom "Doctores pietatis," by Saint Jerome, "Salvatores mundi," by St. Prosper, "Januæ populis civitatis æternæ," and by St. Peter Chysologus, "forma virtutum." Hence St. Isidore has said, "Qui in erudiendis ad virtutem populis præerit, necesse est ut sanctus sit et in nullo reprehensibilis." Pope Hormisdas has written: "Irreprehensibiles esse convenet, quos præesse necesse est corrigendis."—Ep. 25. And St. Denis has pronounced that celebrated sentence, that no one should dare to become the guide of others, unless by

his virtues he has made himself most like to God: "In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus."—Eccles. hier., cap. 3. And according to St. Gregory, the sermons of the priest whose life is not edifying, excite contempt and produce no fruit: "Cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus prædicatio contemnatur."—Hom. 12, in Evang. St. Thomas adds: "Et eadem ratione (contemnuntur) omnia spiritualia ab eis exhibita." Speaking of the priest of God, St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "Purgari prius oportet, deinde purgare; ad Deum approquinquari et alios adducere; sanctificari et postea sanctificare; lucum fieri et alios illuminare."

16. The hand which must wash away the stains and defilements of others, must not be polluted. "Oportet," says St. Gregory, "munda sit manus quæ diluere aliorum sordes curat."—Past., p. 1, c. 9. In another place he says that the torch which does not burn, cannot inflame others: "Qui non ardet non incendit." And St. Bernard says, that to him who loves not, the language of love is a strange and a barbarous tongue: "Lingua amoris ei qui non amat, barbara est et peregrina." Priests are placed in the world as so many mirrors, in which seculars should look at themselves: "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men."—1 Cor. iv. 9. Hence the Council of Trent, speaking of ecclesiastics, says, "In eos . . . . . tanquam in speculum, reliqui omnes oculos conjiciunt, ex iisque sumunt quid imitentur."—Scss. 22, cap. 1. Philip the Abbot, used to say that priests are chosen to defend the people; but for this, their dignity is not sufficient; sanctity of life is also necessary: "De medio populi segregantur ut seipsos et populum tueantur. Ad hanc autem tuitionem, clericalis non sufficit prærogative dignitatis nisi dignitati adjungatur cumulus sanctitatis."

17. Hence the Angelic Doctor, considering all that has been said on the sanctity necessary for the priesthood, has written, that to exercise holy orders worthily, more than ordinary virtue is required: "Ad idoneam executionem ordinum non sufficit bonitas

qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens."—Suppl. q. 35, art. 1, ad 3. Again he says, "Illi qui in divinis mysteriis applicantur, perfecti in virtute esse debent."—In 4 Sent., dist. 24, q. 3, art. 1. In another place, he says, "Interior perfectio ad hoc requiritur quod aliquis digne hujusmodi actus exerceat."—2. 2. q. 184, art. 6. Priests should be holy, that they may give glory, and not dishonour to that God whose ministers they are: "Sancti erunt Deo suo et non polluent nomen ejus."—Lev., xxi. 6. Were a minister of state seen playing in the public places, frequenting public houses, associating with the rabble, speaking and acting in a manner calculated to reflect dishonour on the king, what regard could such a minister entertain for his sovereign? By bad priests who are his ministers, Jesus Christ is covered with shame. St. John Chrysostom says that of unholy priests the Gentiles might say, "Qualis est Deus eorum qui talia agunt? Nunquid sustineret eos talia facientes, nisi consentiret operibus eorum?" Were the Chinese, the Indians, to see a priest of Jesus Christ leading a scandalous life, they might say, how can we believe that the God whom such priests preach, is the true God? were he the true God, how could he bear them in their wickedness without being a party to their crimes?

18. Hence the exhortation of St. Paul: "In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God."—2 Cor., vi. 4. Let us, he says, addressing priests, appear as true ministers of God: *in multa patientia*, bearing with peace poverty, infirmity, persecutions, *in vigiliis in jejuniis*, vigilant in what regards the glory of God, mortifying the senses; *in castitate, in scientia, in suavitate, in charitate non ficta, &c.*, in guarding holy purity, in attending to study in order to assist souls, in practising meekness and true charity to our neighbour; *quasi tristes semper autem gaudentes:* appearing afflicted at being deprived of the pleasures of the world, but enjoying the peace which is the portion of the children of God; *tanquam nihil habentes et omnia possidentes:* poor in earthly goods, but rich in God; for he who possesses

God, possesses all things. Such ought priests to be. In a word, they ought to be holy; because they are the ministers of the God of holiness: "Sancta estote, quia ego sanctus sum."—Lucæ, xi. 44. They ought to be prepared to give their lives for their souls, because they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, who, as he himself has said, came to die for us who are his sheep: "Ego sum pastor bonus. Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis."—Joan., x. 11. They ought, in fine, to be entirely employed in inflaming all men with the holy fire of divine love; because they are the ministers of the Incarnate Word who came into the world for that purpose: "Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur."—Lucæ, xii. 49.

19. David earnestly besought the Lord to grant, for the benefit of the whole world, that his priests might be clothed with justice: "Sacerdotes tui induantur justitia."—Ps. cxxxi. 9. Justice comprises all virtues. Every priest should be clothed with faith by living according to the maxims not of the world but of faith. The maxims of the world are: it is necessary to possess wealth and property, to seek the esteem of others, to indulge in every amusement within our reach. The maxims of faith are: happy are the poor; we should embrace contempt, deny ourselves, and love suffering. The priest must be clothed with holy confidence; hoping for all things not from creatures, but from God alone. He must be clothed with humility; considering himself worthy of all punishment and contempt: with meekness, being sweet to all, particularly to the rude and passionate: with charity towards God and man; towards God, living in an entire union of his soul with God, and making his heart, by means of mental prayer, an altar on which the fire of divine love always burns; and towards man, fulfilling the instruction of the apostle: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy," (Col., iii. 12.) and endeavouring to the best of his ability to relieve all in their spiritual and temporal necessities. I say all; even his persecutors and those who treat him with ingratitude.

20. St. Augustine says: "Nihil in hac vita felicius et hominibus acceptabilius officio (sacerdotis) sed nihil apud Deum laboriosius et periculosius."—Epist. 22, alias 148. It is a great happiness and advantage to be a priest, to have the power of making the Incarnate Word descend from heaven into his hands, and of delivering souls from sin and hell, to be the vicar of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the mediator between God and men, to be raised and exalted above all the monarchs of the earth, to have greater power than the angels, in a word, to be, as St. Clement says, a God on earth: *nihil felicius.* But, on the other hand, *nihil laboriosius et periculosius.* For, if in his hands, Jesus Christ descends to be his food, the priest must be more pure than the clearest water, as St. Francis was told in a vision. If he is a mediator before God in favour of men, he must not appear before God stained with the guilt of any sin; if he is the vicar of the Redeemer, he must be like him in his life. If he is the light of the world, he must be refulgent with the splendour of all virtues. In fine, if he is a priest he must be holy. If he correspond not with God's graces, the greater the gifts which he has received, the more frightful the account which he shall have to render to God: "Cum enim augentur dona, rationes etiam crescunt denorum."—Hom. 9, in Evang. St. Bernard says that the priest "holds a celestial office, that he is made an angel of the Lord, and (adds the saint,) as an angel, he is elected to glory or condemned to hell."—Declam. in verba, ecce nos, &c. St. Ambrose says that a priest should be exempt even from the smallest faults: "Non mediocris esse debet virtus sacerdotalis, cui cavendum non modo ne a gravioribus flagitiis, sit affinis, sed ne minimis quidem."—Lib. 3, Epist. 25.

21. Hence, if a priest is not holy, he is in great danger of being lost. What do some, or rather the greater number of priests do in order to acquire sanctity? They say the office and mass, and do nothing more: they live without making mental prayer, without mortification, without recollection.

Some will say—it is enough for me to be saved. "No," says St. Augustine, "it is not enough; if you say that it is enough, you shall be lost:" "Ubi dixisti sufficit, periisti."—Serm. 169. To be holy, the priest must lead a life of detachment from all things, from worldly society, empty honours, &c.; and particularly from inordinate attachment to relatives. When they see him attend but little to the advancement of his family, and wholly devoted to the things of God, they say to him: "Quid facis nobis sic?" He must answer them in the words of the infant Jesus to his mother, when she found him in the temple: "Quid est quod me quærebatis? Nesciebatis quia in his quæ patris mei sunt oportet me esse?"—Luc. ii. 49. Such should be the answer of a priest to his relatives. Have you, he should say to them, made me a priest? Do you not know that a priest should attend to God alone! Him, only, do I wish to seek.

FOURTH CHAPTER.

On the grievousness and chastisement of sin in a priest.

1. The sin of a priest is very grievous, because he sins in view of the light: in consenting to sin, he knows well what he does. On this account, St. Thomas says, "that the sin of a christian is more grievous than the sin of an infidel: *propter notitiam veritatis.*"—2. 2. q. art. 3. But the light of a secular, though a Christian, is very different from that of a priest. The priest is so well instructed in the divine law, that he teaches it to others. "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law of his mouth."—Malach. ii. 7. Hence, St. Ambrose says, "that the sins of those who know the law, are very grievous, because they are not excused by ignorance:" "Scienti legem et non facienti peccatum est grande." Poor seculars sin, but they sin in the midst of the darkness of the world, at a distance from

the sacraments, badly instructed in spiritual things, and immersed in worldly business; they have but little knowledge of God, and consequently they see but imperfectly the evil which they do in consenting to sin. To use the words of David, they "*shoot in the dark.*" But priests are so full of light, that they are the luminaries by which the people are enlightened: "Vos estis lux mundi."—Mat. v. 14. They are well instructed by so many books which they have read, by so many sermons which they have heard, by so many considerations which they have made, by so many admonitions which they have received from superiors. In a word, to priests is given to know the mysteries of God: "Vobis datum est nosse mysteria regni Dei."—Lucæ. viii. 10. Hence, they well understand the claims which God has to our love and service, the malice of mortal sin, which is an enemy so opposed to God, that were he capable of destruction, a single mortal sin would, as St. Bernard says, destroy him: "Peccatum est destructiorum divinæ bonitatis;" and in another place, the saint says: "Peccatum quantum in se est, Deum perimit." Thus, according to St. Chrysostom, the sinner, "Quantum ad voluntatem suam, occidit Deum." Hence, Father Medina writes, that mortal sin does so much dishonour, and gives so much displeasure to God, that were he capable of grief, sin would make him die through pure sorrow: "Peccatum mortale, si possibile esset, destrueret ipsum Deum, eo quod causa esset tristitiæ in Deo infinitæ." All this the priest understands well: he has also a perfect knowledge of his obligations, by which as a priest, whom the Lord has so highly favoured, he is bound to serve and love God. The more perfectly, then, he sees the enormity of the injury which he does to God by committing sin, the more grievous the malice of his sin: "Quo melius videt," says St. Gregory, "eo gravius peccat."

2. Every sin of a priest is a sin of malice; it is like the sin of the angels who sinned in view of the light. "Angelus Domini factus est," says St. Bernard, speaking of a priest; hence he adds, "peccans

in clero, peccat in cœlo." He sins in the midst of light, and therefore, his sin, as has been said, is a sin of malice: he cannot allege ignoranee, for he knows the great evil of mortal sin: he cannot plead weakness, because he knows the means by which, if he wishes, he can acquire strength; if he is unwilling to adopt the means, the fault in entirely his own. "He would not understand that he might do well."—Ps. xxxv. 4. According to St. Thomas, the sin of malice, is that which is committed with knowledge: "*scienter eligitur*."—1. 2. qu. 78, art. 1. And in another place, he says: "Omne peccatum ex malitia est contra Spiritum Sanctum."—de malo q. 5, art. 4. We know from St. Matthew, that the sin against the Holy Ghost "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."—xii. 32. That is on account of the blindness caused by sins of malice, they shall be pardoned only with great difficulty.

3. Our Saviour prayed on the cross for his persecutors, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—Luc. xxiii. 34. But, for bad priests, this prayer was a source, rather of condemnation than of salvation: for they *know what they do*. Jeremias said, with tears, "How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed."—Lam. iv. 1. "The gold which has been obscured," says Cardinal Hugo, "is the sinful priest, who ought to shine forth with divine love; but by committing sin, he becomes black, and an object of horror, even to hell, and becomes more hateful to God than other sinners." St. John Chrysostom says that the Lord is not so much enraged against any sinner as against him who, while he shines with the splendour of the sacerdotal dignity, insults the divine majesty: "Nulla re Deus magis offenditur quam quando peccatores sacerdotii dignitate præfulgeant."—Hom. 41, in Mat. The malice of the sins of a priest is increased by his ingratitude to God, by whom he has been so highly exalted. St. Thomas teaches that the grievousness of sin increases in proportion to the ingratitude of the sinner.—2. 2. quæst. 74, art. 10. "We ourselves," says St. Basil, "are not so indignant at any

offence as at that which we receive from a friend and familiar acquaintance: "Naturaliter magis indignamur his qui nobis familiarissimi sunt cum in nos peccaverint."—Ap. Gloss. in 1 Pet., iv. What greater exultation can God give to a man than by raising him to the dignity of his own priest? "Enumera honores, dignitates," says St. Ephrem, "omnium apex est sacerdos." What greater honour, what more exalted rank, could God confer upon him than that of being his own representative, his coadjutor, the sanctifier of souls, and the dispenser of his sacraments? Priests are called by St. Prosper, "Dispensatores regiæ domus." The Lord has chosen the priest from among so many men for his own minister, to offer to him in sacrifice his own very Son. "He chose him" says the Holy Ghost, "out of all men living, to offer sacrifice to God."—Eccl., xlv. 20. He has given him power over the body of Jesus Christ, he has placed in his hands the keys of paradise, he has raised him above all the kings of the earth, and above all the angels in heaven; in a word, he has made him, as it were, a God on earth: "*Deus terrenus.* "Quid . . . . debui ultra (here God appears to speak only of priests,) facere vineæ meæ et non feci?"—Isa., v. 4. How horrible, then, the ingratitude of the priest whom God has loved so tenderly, and who insults the Lord in his own very house? "What is the meaning," says Jeremias, "that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?"—Jer., xi. 15. Hence St. Gregory weeps and says, "Heu Domine Deus, quia ipsi (sacerdotes) sunt in persecutione tua primi, qui videntur in ecclesia tua regere principatum!"

4. It appears, also, that it was of bad priests that God complained when he called on heaven and earth to witness the ingratitude with which he was treated by his own children. "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth . . . I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me."—Isa., i. 2. And who are these children but priests, who after being raised by God to such an elevation, and

nourished at his table with his own flesh, dare to despise his love and his grace? Of this he also complained by the mouth of David: "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne it." Ps. liv. 13. Were my enemy, were an idolater, a heretic, or a worldling, to offend me, I would bear with him, but how can I bear to see myself insulted by you, my priest, who are my friend and fellow-guest? "But thou, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweet-meats together with me."—Ibid., *v.* 14. The Prophet Jeremias weeps and exclaims: "Qui vescebantur voluptuose . . . . qui nutriebantur croceis, amplexati sunt stercora."—Thren. iv. 5. Oh! what a misery, what a horrible thing, to see the man who fed on celestial food and was clad in purple, wearing the sordid garment of sin, and feeding on filth and dung! By the word *croceis*, the interpreters (resting on the Hebrew text, "Qui in purpura educati fuerunt,") understand the purple; and priests are said to be honoured with the purple on account of their regal dignity: "You are a chosen nation, a kingly priesthood."—1 Pet., ii. 9.

5. But let us now see the chastisement which awaits the sinful priest—a chastisement proportioned to the grievousness of his sin." According to the measure of the sin, shall the measure also of the stripes be." —Deut., xxv. 2. St. John Chrysostom gives up as lost the priest who commits a single mortal sin after his elevation to the priesthood: "Si privatim pecces, nihil tale passurus es, si in sacerdotio peccas, periisti."—Hom. 3, in act. Ap. Terrible indeed are the threats which the Lord has pronounced, by the mouth of Jeremias, against priests who fall into sin. "For the prophet and the priest are defiled, and in my house I have found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Therefore, their way shall be as the slippery way in the dark; for they err and fall therein."—Jer., xxiii., 11, 12. What hope of life would you give to him who, without light to guide his steps, should walk on a slippery way along the brink of a precipice, and who should from time to time be violently assailed by

enemies, endeavouring to cast him down the precipice? This is the miserable state into which a priest who commits mortal sin, has brought himself.

6. *The slipperg way in the dark.* By sin the priest loses light and becomes blind. "It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back."—2 Pet. ii. 21. How much better would it be for the priest who falls into sin, to have been a poor uninstructed peasant, who had never known the law. For, after so much knowledge learned from books, from sermons, from directors, and after so many illuminations received from God, the miserable man, by yielding to sin and trampling under foot all the graces which God had bestowed upon him, shall make all the lights received serve to increase his blindness, and to keep him in the state of perdition. "Major scientia majoris pœnæ fit materia," says St. John Chrysostom, (Hom. 7, in Mat.) and the saint adds, "propterea sacerdos eadem cum subditis peccata committens, non eadem, sed multo acerbiora patietur." The sin to which the priest consents, may be committed by many seculars, but his chastisement shall be far more severe, because his blindness shall be far greater than theirs. He shall receive the punishment threatened by the Prophet: "Ut videntes non videant, et audientes non intelligant."—Lucæ, viii. 10.

7. "And this," says the same St. Chrysostom, "we know from experience: Sæcularis homo post peccatum facile ad pœnitentiam venit." A secular who falls into sin, if he attends a mission, or is present at a sermon in which he hears some eternal truth regarding the malice of sin, the certainty of death, the rigour of the divine judgment, or the pains of hell, easily enters into himself and returns to God; "because," says the saint, "these truths are new to him and fill him with terror: Quia quasi aliquid novi audiens, expavescit." But what impression can the eternal truths and the menaces of the holy Scriptures, make on a priest who has trampled on the grace of God, and on all the lights and knowledge which he has received? "Omnia enim quæ sunt in Scrip-

turis," continues the holy Doctor, "ante oculos ejus inveterata, vilia æstimantur; namque quicquid sibi terribile est usu vilescit."—Hom. 40, in c. 21. Mat. Hence he concludes that there is nothing more impossible than to reform a person who sins with a perfect knowledge of the law: "Nihil autem impossibilius illum corrigere, quia omnia scit."

8. "Great indeed," says St. Jerome, "is the dignity of priests, but great also is their perdition, if in the priesthood they turn their back on God: Grandis dignitas sacerdotum, sed grandis eorum ruina si peccant."—Lib. 18, in cap. 44, Ezech. "The greater the height," says St. Bernard, "to which God has raised them, the more precipitous and ruinous shall be their fall: Ab altiori fit casus gravior." He who falls on level ground is seldom severely hurt, but the man who falls from a great height is said not to fall but to be precipitated, and therefore his fall is mortal. "Et ut levius est de plano corruere," says St. Ambrose, "sic gravius est qui de sublimi ceciderit dignitate; quia ruina quæ de alto est graviori casu colliditur."—de dign. sacerd., cap. 3. "Let us who are priests," says St. Jerome, "rejoice at our elevation to so great a height, but let our fear of falling be proportioned to our exaltation: Lætemur ad ascensum, sed timeamus ad lap sum."—Loco supra cit. It is to the priest that the Lord appears to speak by the Prophet Ezechial, when he says, "I set thee on the holy mountain of God, and thou hast sinned; and I cast thee out from the mountain of God and destroyed thee."—xxviii. 14, &c. O Priests, says the Lord, I have placed you on my holy mountain, and have made you the luminaries of the world: "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid."—Mat., v. 14. Justly, then, has St. Laurence Justinian said that the greater the grace which God has bestowed on priests, the more severe the chastisement which their sins deserve, and the more elevated the state to which he has raised them, the more disastrous shall be their fall. "Quo gratia est cumulatior, et status sublimior, eo casus est gravior, et culpa damnabilior." He who falls into a river

sinks deeper in proportion to the height from which he has fallen. "Altius mergitur," says Peter de Blois, "qui de alto cadit." Beloved priest, remember that in elevating you to the sacerdotal state, God has raised you up to heaven, by making you a man no longer earthly but altogether celestial: If you sin you fall from heaven. Consider, then, how ruinous and destructive shall be your fall. "Quid altius sœlo?" says St. Peter Crysologus, "de cœlo cadet, in cœlestibus qui delinquit."—Serm. 26. Your fall shall, according to St. Bernard, be like that of a thunderbolt, which rushes headlong with vehement impetuosity: "Tamquam fulgur in impetu vehementer dejicieris." That is, your destruction is irreparable: "Corruent in ea." In your unhappy soul is verified the threat of the Lord against Capharnaum: "And thou, Capharnaum, which are exalted unto heaven, thou shall be trust down to hell."—Luke, x. 15.

9. Such the chastisement which the priest who falls into sin, merits on account of his infinite ingratitude to God. He owes more gratitude to God than others, because he has received greater favours. "Cum augentur dona," says St. Gregory, "rationes etiam crescunt donorum."—Hom. 9, in Evang. The ungrateful, as a learned author says, deserve to be deprived of all the favours which they have received: "Ingratus meretur beneficii subtractionem." Jesus Christ has said: "To every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away."—Mat., xxv. 29. Upon those who are grateful to God, he shall pour his graces more abundantly; but the priest who after so many lights, and so many communions, turns his back on God, despises all his favours, and renounces his grace, shall be justly deprived of all. The Lord is liberal to all, but not to the ungrateful. "Ingratitudo," says St. Bernard, "exsiccat fontem divinæ pietatis."

10. Hence St. Jerome justly says; "Nulla certe in mundo tam crudelis bestia quam malus sacerdos; nam corrigi se non patitur."—Epis. ad Dam. And St. John Chrysostom, or the author of the *Imperfect*

Work, writes, "Laici delinquentes facile emendantur; clerici si mali fuerint, inemendabiles sunt."—Hom. 43, in Mat. To priests who fall into sin, we may, with St. Peter Damian, (lib. 4, Epis. 14,) apply in a special manner the words of the apostle: "Impossibile est.....eos qui semel illuminati, gustaverunt etiam donum, et participes facti sunt Spiritus Sancti et prolapsi sunt, rursus renovari ad pœnitentiam."—Heb., vi. 4. 6. Who has been more enlightened than the priest? who has tasted more frequently the heavenly gifts, and partaken more abundantly of the Holy Ghost? St. Thomas says that the rebel angels remained obstinate in sin, because they sinned in view of the light; and St. Bernard writes that God shall treat the sinful priest in a similar manner: "Sacerdos angelus Domini factus est: tanquam angelus, aut eligitur aut reprobatur."—Declam. in verb. ecce nos, &c. Our Lord said to St. Bridget: "Ego conspicio paganos et Judæos, sed nullos video deteriores quam sacerdotes; sunt ipsi in eodem peccato quo cecidit Lucifer." And let it be observed in this place, that, according to Innocent the Third, many things are venial sins in seculars which are mortal in ecclesiastics: "Multa sunt laicis venialia quæ clericis sunt mortalia."—Serm. 1, in Cons. pont.

11. To priests we may also apply what St. Paul says in another place: "The earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it.....*and* bringeth forth thorns and briers, is reprobate and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt."—Hebr., vi. 7, &c. What showers of grace has the priest continually received from God! And, after all, he brings forth briers and thorns instead of fruit. Miserable man! he is on the point of being reprobated, of receiving the final malediction, and of being sent in the end, after so many favours from God, to burn for ever in the fire of hell. But what dread has the priest who turns his back on God, of the fire of hell? Priests who fall into sin lose light, and lose also the fear of God. Behold the Lord himself assures us of this. "'If I be a master where is my fear,' saith the Lord of Hosts, 'to you, O Priests, that despise my

name?' "—Malach., i. 6. St. Bernard says that priests falling from on high, remain so immersed in their malice, that they forget God, and disregard the divine threats to such a degree that the danger of their damnation has no longer any terror for them: "Alto quippe demersi oblivionis somno, ad nullum dominicæ comminationis tonitru expergiscuntur, ut suum periculum expavescant."—Serm. 77, in Cant.

12. But why should that excite our wonder, since by committing sin the priest falls from an immense height into a deep pit, in which he is bereft of light, and therefore despises all things; verifying in himself the words of the Wise Man: "Impius cum in profundum venerit peccatorum contemnit."—Prov., xviii. 3. *Impius:* this wicked man is the priest who sins through malice: *in profundum;* by a single mortal sin, the priest *altius mergitur,* he sinks to the depth of misery and remains in blindness; *contemnit;* and thus he despises chastisements, admonitions, the presence of Jesus Christ who is near him on the altar: he despises all, and blushes not to surpass in malice Judas, the betrayer of Jesus Christ. Of this our Lord complained to St. Bridget: "Tales sacerdotes non sunt mei sacerdotis, sed veri proditores."—Rev., lib. 1, cap. 45. *Proditores:* yes, real traitors, who avail themselves of the celebration of Mass to outrage Jesus Christ by sacrilege. But what shall be the unhappy end of such priests? Behold it: "In terra sanctorum iniqua gessit et non videbit gloriam Domini."—Isa., xxvi. 10. The end shall be, first, abandonment by God, and then the fire of hell. But, father, some may say, this language is too terrific. Do you, they ask, wish to drive us to despair? I answer with St. Augustine, *territus terreo.* Then a priest, who has offended God since his ordination, may ask, is there no hope of pardon for me? Yes, there is hope, if he repents and entertains a horror for the evil he has done. Let such a priest, then, thank the Lord with his whole heart, if he, too, finds himself aided by divine grace; but he must instantly give himself to that God who calls him. "Audiamus illum," says St. Augustine, "dum rogat, ne nos non

audiat dum judicat." From this day forward, let us, dearly beloved priests, learn to esteem our noble elevation, and regarding ourselves as ministers of a God, let us blush to become the slaves of sin and of the devil. "Nobilem," says St. Peter Damian "necesse est esse sacerdotem, ut qui minister est Domini, erubescat esse servum peccati."

13. Let us not imitate the folly of seculars who think only of the present. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."—Heb., ix. 27. We must all appear at this judgment: "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done."—2 Cor., v. 10. To each of us the Judge shall say: "Redde rationem villicationis tuæ."—Lucæ, xvi. 2. That is, of your priesthood; how have you exercised it? for what end have you exercised it? Dearly beloved priest, were you now to be judged, would you feel satisfied and content with the manner in which you have discharged your ministry? or would you not say "When he shall examine, what shall I answer him?" —Job, xxxi. 14. When the Lord chastises a people, the chastisement begins with the priest, for he is the cause of the sins of the people, either by his bad example, or by his negligence in attending to their sanctification. Hence the Lord says, "The time is that judgment should begin at the house of God."—1 Pet., iv. 17.—In the slaughter described by Ezechiel, God wished the priests to be the first victims of his vengeance: "Begin ye at my sanctuary."—ix. 6. That is, says Origen, *a sacerdotibus*.—Tract. 7, in Mat. "A most severe judgment," says the Wise Man, "for them that bear rule."—Sap., vi. 6. "And unto whom," says Jesus Christ, "much is given, of him much shall be required."—Luke, xii. 48. The author of the *Imperfect Work* says, "Laicus in die judicii stolam sacerdotalem accipiet. Sacerdos autem peccator spoliabitur sacerdotii dignitate et erit inter infideles et hypocritas."—Hom. 40, in Mat. "Hear ye this, O priests," says the Prophet Osee, "……for there is judgment against you."—Osee, v. i.

14. And as the judgment of priests is most rigorous, so also shall their damnation be most miserable. "Duplici contritione," says Jeremias, "contere eos."—Jer., xvii. 18. "Grandis dignitas sacerdotum, sed grandis ruina si peccent."—Conc. par. 6, an. 828. And St. John Chrysostom says, "Sacerdos, si pariter cum subditis, peccat, non eadem, sed multo acerbiora patietur." It was revealed to St. Bridget that priests who are sinners "præ omnibus diabolis profundius submergentur in infernum."—Rev., lib. 4, cap. 135. Oh! how great the rejoicing of the devils when a priest enters hell. All hell is in confusion to meet the priest who comes. "Hell below," says Isaias, "was in an uproar to meet thee at thy coming.....All the princes of the earth have risen from their thrones." Isa., xiv. 9. All the princes of that land of wo rise up to give the first place of torment to the damned priest. "All," continues the prophet, "shall answer and say to thee: 'thou also art wounded as well as we,' thou art become like unto us."—Ibid., *v.* 10. O Priest, you once ruled over us, you have so often made the Incarnate Word descend on the altars, you have delivered so many souls from hell, and now you have become like us miserable and tormented as we are: "Thy pride is brought to hell."—Ibid., *v.* 11. Your pride by which you have despised God and your neighbour, has in the end brought you to this land of misery, "Thy carcase is fallen down: under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering."—Ibid. As a king you shall have a royal couch, and a purple robe: behold, fire and worms shall for ever corrode your body and your soul. Oh! how shall the devils then scoff at all the Masses, sacraments, and sacred functions of the damned priest. "Et deriserunt sabbata ejus."—Thren., i 7.

15. Be attentive, dearly beloved priests, for the devils tempt one priest more than a hundred seculars; because a priest who is lost, brings with him many seculars to hell. St. Chrysostom says, "Qui pastorem de medio tulerit, totum gregem dissipabit."—Vide Hom., lib. 1, in 1, ad Tim. And a certain author (de sing. Cler. inter op. S. Cypr.) justly says: "Plus

duces quam milites appetuntur in pugna." In war, the combatants endeavour first of all to kill the enemy's commanders. St. Jerome adds: "Non quærit diabolus homines infideles et eos qui foris sunt (that is, who are outside of the sanctuary); de ecclesia Christi rapere festinat, escæ, ejus secundum Habacuc electæ sunt."—Ep. 22. To the devils, the souls of ecclesiastics are the most delicious food.

[What follows may serve to supply motives of compunction in the act of contrition.]

Dearly beloved priests, the Lord appears to say to you what he said to the Jewish people: "Quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te? responde mihi." Tell me, what evil have I done you: have I not, on the contrary, bestowed many favours upon you? "Eduxi te de terra Egypti:" I have drawn you out of the world, I have selected you from among so many seculars, to make you my priest, my minister, my familiar: "et tu parasti crucem salvatori tuo:" and you, for a miserable interest, for a vile pleasure, have again nailed me to the cross. "Ego te pavi manna per desertum:" in the wilderness of this earth, I have fed you every morning with the celestial manna, that is, with my divine flesh, and with my blood: "Et tu me cæcidisti alapis et flagellis. Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci? Ego plantavi te vineam speciosissimam, et tu facta es mihi nimis amara:" I have destined you for the vineyard of my delight, planting in you so many lights, and so many graces, that they might produce sweet and precious fruits; and you have given me only fruits of bitterness. "Ego dedi te sceptrum regale:" I have made you a king, and have exalted you above all the kings of the earth: "et tu dedisti capiti meo spineam coronam," by the bad thoughts to which you have consented. "Ego te exaltavi:" I have raised you to the dignity of my representative, and have given you the keys of heaven; I have, in fine, made you, as it were, a God on earth: "Et tu me suspendisti in patibulo crucis," and you have despised all my graces, my friendship, nailing me again to the cross, &c.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

On the injury which tepidity does to a Priest.

1. The Lord commanded St. John (Apoc. cap. 2.) to write to the Bishop of Ephesus, the following words: "Scio opera tua et laborem et patientiam tuam."—*v.* 2. I know well all that you do; I know your labours for my glory; I know your patience in the toils of your office. But he adds: "Sed habeo adversum te, quod charitatem tuam primam reliquisti."—*v.* 4. But I must reprove you for having fallen away from your first fervour. But what great evil was there in this? What great evil? Listen to what our Lords adds: "Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and do penance, and do the first works: or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place."—*v.* 5. Remember whence you have fallen; do penance, and return to the first fervour, with which, as my minister, you are bound to live, otherwise I will reject you as unworthy of the ministry which I have committed to you. Is tepidity, then, productive of so much ruin? Yes, it brings with it great ruin, and the greatest evil is, that this ruin is not known, and is, therefore, neither avoided nor dreaded by the tepid, and especially by priests. The majority of them are shipwrecked on this blind rock of tepidity, and therefore, many of them are lost. I call it a blind rock: because the great danger of perdition to which the tepid are exposed, consists in this, that their tepidity does not allow them to see the great havoc which it produces in the soul. Many are unwilling to be altogether separated from Jesus Christ; they wish to follow him, but they wish to follow him at a distance, like St. Peter, who, when the Redeemer was seized in the garden, "followed him from afar off:" "Sequebatur eum a longe."—Mat. xxvi. 58. But they who act in this manner, shall easily fall into the misfortune which befel St. Peter, who, when charged by a servant maid, with being a disciple of the Redeemer, thrice denied Jesus Christ.

2. "Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet."—Eccl. 19. 1. The interpreter applies this passage to the tepid Christian, and says that he shall first lose devotion, "decidet a pietate;" and shall afterwards fall, "a statu gratiæ in statum peccati," passing from venial sins, which he has disregarded, to grievous and mortal offences. Eusebius Emissenus says that he who is not afraid to offend God by venial faults, shall scarcely be exempt from mortal sins. "Difficile est ut non cadere in gravia permittatur qui minus gravia non veretur."—Hom. init. Quad. "By a just judgment," says St. Isidore, "the Lord will permit him who despises minor transgressions to fall into grievous crimes: Judicio autem divino in reatum nequiorem labentur qui distringere minora sua facta contemnunt." Trifling maladies, when few, do little injury to health, but when they are numerous and frequent, they bring on mortal diseases. "Magna præcavisti," says St. Augustine, "de minutis quid agis? Projecisti molem: vide ne arena obruaris."—In Ps. 49. You are careful to avoid grievous falls, but you fear not small ones; you are not deprived of life by the great rock of any mortal sin, but beware, says the saint, lest by a multitude of venial sins you be crushed as by a heap of sand. We all know that mortal sin alone kills the soul, and that venial sins, however great their number, cannot rob the soul of divine grace. But it is also necessary to understand what St. Gregory teaches, that the habit of committing light faults without remorse, and without an effort to correct them, gradually deprives us of the fear of God; and when the fear of God is lost, it is easy to pass from venial to mortal sins. "Ut, usu cuncta levigante, nequaquam postea committere gravia timeamus."—Lib. 10, Mor., c. 9. St. Dorotheus adds that by despising light faults, we expose ourselves to the danger of falling into perfect insensibility. "Periculum est ne in perfectam insensibilitatem deveniamus."—Ser. 3. He who disregards small offences is in danger of an universal insensibility, so that afterwards he shall feel no horror even of mortal sins.

3. St. Teresa, as the Roman Rota attests, never

fell into any mortal sin; but still our Lord showed her the place prepared for her in hell, not because she had deserved hell, but because, had she not risen from the state of tepidity in which she lived, she should in the end have lost the grace of God, and should be damned. Hence the apostle says, "Nolite locum dare diabolo."—Ephes., iv. 27. The devil is satisfied when we begin to open the door to him by disregarding small faults; for he shall then labour to open it perfectly, by leading us into grievous transgressions. "Lapsus quispiam," says Salvian, "nequaquam subita ruina corruisse credendus est." That is, when you hear of the fall of a spiritual soul, do not imagine that the devil has suddenly precipitated her into sin; for he has first brought her into tepidity, and then has cast her into the precipice of enmity with God. Hence St. John Chrysostom says that he knew many persons adorned with all virtues, who afterwards fell into tepidity, and from tepidity into an abyss of vice: "Novimus multos, omnis virtutis numeros habuisse tamen negligentia lapsos ad vitiorum barathrum devenisse." It is related in the Teresian Chronicles, that Sister Anne of the Incarnation, once saw in hell a person whom she had regarded as a saint: on her countenance appeared a multitude of small animals, which represented the multitude of defects which she committed and disregarded during life. Of these some were heard to say, *by us you commenced;* others, *by us you continued;* others, *by us you have brought yourself to hell.*

4. "Scio opera tua," says our Lord, through St. John, to the Bishop of Sardis, "quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus."—Apoc, iii. 15. Behold the state of a tepid soul, neither cold nor hot: "Tepidus," says Menochius in his exposition of this passage, "est qui non audet Deum, mortaliter sciens et volens offendere, sed perfecti oris vitæ studium negligit; unde facile concupiscentiis se committit." A tepid priest is not manifestly cold, because he does not knowingly and deliberately commit mortal sins; but neglecting to seek after the perfection to which he is

bound by the obligations of his state, he makes little of venial sins, he commits many of them every day without scruple, by lies, by intemperance in eating and drinking, by imprecations, by distraction at the Office and Mass, by detractions, by jests opposed to modesty: he leads a life of dissipation in the midst of worldly business and amusements; he cherishes dangerous desires and attachments; full of vain glory, of human respect, and self-esteem, he cannot bear a contradiction or a disrespectful word; he neglects mental prayer and is destitute of piety. Father Alvares says that the defects and faults of a tepid soul are "velut irremissæ ægrotatiunculæ quæ vitam quidem non dissolvunt, sed ita corpus extenuant ut, accedente aliquo gravi morbo, corpus vires non habet resistendi."—Lib. 5, p. 2, c. 16. The tepid Christian is like a sick man who has laboured under many light maladies, which because they are incessant, reduce him to such a state of debility, that as soon as he is attacked by any serious disease, that is, by a strong temptation, he has not strength to resist, and falls, but falls with greater ruin. Hence the Lord continues to address the tepid bishop, saying, "Utinam frigidus esses aut calidus! Sed quia tepidus es, et nec frigidus nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo."—Apoc. loco cit. Let him who finds himself miserably fallen into the state of tepidity, consider these words and tremble.

5. "Utinam frigidus esse!" Better, says the Lord, that you were cold, that is, deprived of my grace; for then there should be greater reason to hope for your recovery from so miserable a state; but by remaining in it, you shall be exposed to greater danger of rushing into grievous sins without any hope of ever emerging from them. "Licet frigidus sit pejor tepido," says Cornelius a Lapide, "tamen pejor est status tepidi, quia est in majori periculo ruendi, sine spe resurgendi."—Cor. a Lap., in Apoc., iii. 16, St. Bernard says that it is easier to convert a wicked layman than a tepid ecclesiastic. Pereida adds that it is more easy to bring an infidel to the faith, than

to renew a tepid Christian in the spirit of fervour. "Facilius enim est quemlibet paganum ad fidem Christi adducere quam talem aliquem a suo torpore ad spiritus fervorem renovare." And Cassian has said that he saw many sinners consecrate themselves to God with their whole heart, but that he knew no one who had risen from tepidity to fervour. "Frequenter vidimus de frigidis ad specialem pervenisse fervorem, de tepidis omnino non vidimus." St. Gregory holds out hopes to a sinner not yet converted, but he despairs of him who, after having repented, and given himself to God with fervour, falls into tepidity. Behold his words: "Sicut ante teporem frigus sub spe est ut aliquando veniat ad fervorem; ita tepor, quia a fervore defecit, in desperatione est. Qui enim adhuc in peccatis est, conversionis fiduciam non amittit, qui autem post conversionem tepescit, etiam spem quæ esse potuit de peccatore subtraxit." —Past., p. 3, adm. 34.

6. In a word, tepidity is a desperate and almost incurable evil. For in order to be able to avoid danger it is necessary to know it. Now the tepid, when they have fallen into that miserable state of darkness, do not even know their danger. Tepidity is like a hectic fever which is scarcely perceived. The tepid man does not see even habitual defects. "Major culpa," says St. Gregory, "quo citius agnoscitur, celerius emendatur, minor vero diu, quia quasi nulla creditur et in usu retinetur. Unde fit plerumque ut mens, assueta malis levibus, nec graviora perhorrescat et in majoribus contemnat."—Past., 3. p., adm. 34. Grievous faults, because they are more easily observed, are more readily corrected; but he who disregards light defects, continues to commit them, and thus by the habit of despising minor transgressions, he shall soon despise grievous sins. Besides, mortal sin always excites a certain horror even in habitual sinners, but to the tepid, his imperfections, inordinate attachments, dissipations, love of pleasure, or of self-esteem, cause no horror.—These little faults are the more dangerous, because they imperceptibly dispose him to ruin. "Magna pec-

cata," says Father Alvares, "eo minus periculosa sunt quo aspectum satis tetrum ostendunt; et minima periculosiora videntur quia latenter ad ruinam disponunt."—P. Alva., lib. 5, p. 2, cap. 16.

7. Hence St. John Chrysostom has written that celebrated sentence, that we ought in a certain manner to be more careful to avoid light faults than grievous sins: "Non tanto studio magna peccata esse vitanda quam parva; illa enim natura adversatur, hæc autem quia parva sunt, desides reddunt. Dum contemnuntur, non potest ad eam expulsionem animus generose insurgere; unde cito ex parvis maxima fiunt." The reason, then, assigned by the saint is, that mortal sins excite a natural horror, but light faults are disregarded, and therefore they soon become grievous. And the greatest evil is, that small defects which are disregarded, render the soul more careless about her spiritual interests, and, therefore, because she has been accustomed to despise slight offences, they lead her to think little of grievous transgressions. In the Canticles, the Lord says, "Capite nobis vulpes parvulas quæ demoliuntur vineas, nam vinea nostra floruit." ii. 15. Mark the word *vulpes:* he does not tell us to catch the lions and tigers, but the foxes. These foxes destroy the vine; they make a multitude of dens, and thus dry up the roots, that is, devotion and good desires, which are the roots of spiritual life. He also says *parvulas.* Why does he tell us to catch the little and not the large foxes? Because the little foxes excite less terror, but often do more mischief than the large ones. For, as Father Alvarez says, small faults when disregarded, impede the infusion of divine graces, and thus the soul remains barren, and is finally lost. "Culpæ leves et imperfectiones vulpes parvulæ sunt in quibus nihil noxium aspicimus; sed hæ vineam, id est animam demoliuntur, quia eam sterilem faciunt, dum pluviam cœlestis auxilii impediunt." The Holy Ghost adds: *nam vinea nostra floruit.* How great the evil of venial faults when multiplied and not abhorred? They eat the flowers, that is, they destroy the good desires of advancing in perfection, and when these

desires fail, the soul shall always go backward until she finds herself fallen into a precipice from which it will be difficult to rescue her.

8. "Sed quia tepidus es, incipiam te evomere. Let us conclude the exposition of this text of the Apocalypse. A draught which is cold or hot, is taken with facility, but when tepid it is taken with great difficulty; because it provokes vomiting. This precisely is what the Lord has threatened against the tepid soul, "Incipiam te evomere ex ore meo," Ap. iii. 16. In expounding this passage Menochius says, "Porro tepidus incipit evomi cum, permanens in tempore suo, Deo nauseam movere incipit, donec tandem omnino in morte sua evomatur, et a Christo in æternum separetur." The tepid are in danger of being vomited forth by God, that is, of being abandoned without hope of remedy. This is what the Lord means by vomiting the soul out of his mouth; for all have a great horror of taking back what they vomit. "Vomitus," says Cornelius a Lapide, "significat Deum execrari tepidos sicut execramur id quod os evomit." How does God begin to vomit forth the tepid priest? He ceases to give him any longer these loving calls (this precisely means to be vomited forth from the mouth of God), these spiritual consolations, these good desires. In fine, he shall be deprived of spiritual unction. The unhappy man will go to meditation, but shall make it with great tediousness, dissipation, and unwillingness. Hence he shall by degrees begin to omit it, and thus shall cease to recommend himself to God by petitions for his graces, and by neglecting to ask the divine graces, he shall always become more poor, and shall go from bad to worse. He shall say Mass and the Office, but they shall be a source of demerit rather than of merit. He shall perform all his functions with difficulty and by force, or without devotion. "Calcabis olivam, et non ungeris oleo."—Mich., vi. 15. You shall, says the Lord, be anointed all over with oil, but you shall remain without unction. The Mass, the divine Office, preaching, hearing confessions, assisting the dying, attending at funerals, are exercises which should ex-

cite new fervour; but, after all these functions you shall remain dry, without peace, dissipated, agitated by a thousand temptations. "Incipiam te evomere." Behold how God begins to vomit you out of his mouth.

9. Some priests may say it is enough for me to avoid mortal sins and to save my soul. No, answers St. Augustine, you who are a priest and therefore obliged to walk in the narrow way of perfection, shall not even save your soul by treading the broad way of tepidity: "Ubi dixisti; sufficit periisti." St. Gregory says that they who are to be saved as saints, and wish to be saved as imperfect souls, shall not be saved. And this our Lord one day gave Blessed Angela of Foligno, to understand: "They who are enlightened by me to walk in the way of perfection and through tepidity wish to tread in the ordinary path, shall be abandoned by me." It is certain, as we have seen in the Third Chapter, that a priest is bound to be holy, as well on account of his dignity as the familiar and minister of God, as on account of his office of offering to God the sacrifice of the Mass, of mediator for the people before the Diviny Majesty, and of sanctifier of souls by means of the sacraments. It is that he may walk in the way of perfection that God loads him with so many graces and special helps. Hence, when he exercises his ministry with negligence, amid defects and faults, without even detesting them, God pronounces a malediction against him. "Maledictus homo qui facit opus Dei negligenter."—Jer., 48. This malediction consists in abandonment by God. "Deus," writes St. Augustine, "negligentes deserere consuevit." The Lord, says the saint, usually abandons souls favoured by his special graces, when after all his gifts they neglect to live according to the perfection to which they are called. God, observes a certain author, wishes to be served by his priests with the fervour with which the seraphim serve him in heaven; otherwise he will withdraw his graces and permit them to sleep in tepidity, and thence to fall, first into the precipice of sin and afterwards into hell: "Deus vult a seraphinis ministrari; tepido gra-

tiam suam subtrahit, sinit eum dormire itaque ruere in barathrum." The tepid priest, weighed down by so many venial sins and by so many inordinate attachments, remains, as it were, in a state of insensibility. Hence the graces received, and the obligations of the priesthood, make but little impression upon him, and therefore, the Lord shall justly withhold the abundant helps which are morally necessary for the fulfilment of the obligations of his state; thus he shall go from bad to worse, and, with his defects, his blindness shall increase. Perhaps God is bound to make his graces abound in those who are parsimonious and ungenerous to him? No, says the apostle, he who sows little shall reap but little: "Qui parce seminat parce et metet."—2 Cor., ix. 6.

10. The Lord has declared that to the grateful who preserve his graces, he will multiply his favours, but from the ungrateful he shall take away the gifts which had been bestowed upon them. "Omni habenti dabitur, et abundabit; ei autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo."—Mat., xxv. 29. Besides, St. Matthew says that when the master receives no fruit from the vineyard, he takes it away from the husbandmen to whom he had given it, and after punishing them consigns it to others. "He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him fruit in due season."—xxi. 41. He afterwards adds, "Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."—Ibid., 43. That is, God shall take out of life the priest to whom he gave the care of his kingdom, or of procuring his glory, and shall intrust his interests to others who will be grateful for his favours and faithful to his graces.

11. Hence it happens, that from so many sacrifices, so many communions, and so many prayers offered in the Office and in the Mass, many priests draw little or no fruit. "Seminastis multum," says the Prophet Aggeus, "et intulistis parum . . . . . et qui mercedes congregavit misit eas in sacculum per-

tusum."—Ag., i. 6. Such the tepid priest! He lays up all his spiritual exercises *in a bag with holes;* thus no merit remains, but on the contrary, in consequence of committing many defects in the performance of these exercises, he always renders himself more deserving of chastisement. The tepid priest is not far from perdition. The heart of a priest should, as Peter Blessensis says, be the altar on which the fire of divine love always burns. But what proof of burning love for God does the priest give who is content with avoiding mortal sin, but takes no trouble to abstain from displeasing God by light faults. "Signum amoris satis tepidi," says Father Alvarez, velle amatum in solis rebus gravibus non offendere, et in aliis quæ non tanta severitate præcipit, ejus voluntatem violare."—P. Alvar., lib. 1, c. 12. To become a good priest, a man requires not the common graces, nor a small number of graces, but special and abundhelps. But how can God be generous and abundant in his graces to him who is appointed to serve him, and who serves him so badly? St. Ignatius of Loyola sent one day for a lay brother who led a very tepid life, and said to him: "Tell me, my brother, for what purpose have you entered religion?" The lay brother answered, "to serve God." "And is it thus," replied the saint, "you serve him? Had you told me that you came to serve a cardinal or an earthly prince, you should be more deserving of compassion; but you tell me that you have come to serve God, and do you serve him so badly?" Every priest enters into the court, not among the servants, but among the familiars of God, who have continually to treat confidentially with him on matters of the utmost importance to his glory. Hence a tepid priest dishonours God more than he honours him; for, by his negligent and imperfect life he shows that he considers God unworthy of being served and loved with greater fervour. He declares that in pleasing God, he does not find that felicity which is sufficient to make the soul perfectly content; he declares that his Divine Majesty is unworthy of the love which obliges us to prefer his glory to all self-gratification.

12. Be attentive, dearly beloved priests, let us tremble lest all the grandeurs and honours by which God has raised us to such an elevation among men, should only terminate in our eternal damnation. St. Bernard says that the solicitude of the devils for our destruction should make us solicitous in labouring for salvation. "Hostium malitia, qui tam solliciti sunt in nostram percussionem, nos quoque sollicitos faciat, ut nos in timore et tremore ipsorum salutem operemur."—Serm. 2, de S. Andrea. Oh! how active are our enemies in seeking the perdition of a priest. They desire the fall of one priest more ardently than that of a hundred seculars; as well because the victory over a priest is a far greater triumph than a victory over a layman, as because a priest who falls, brings many others with him to perdition. But as flies avoid boiling and run to tepid water, so the devils do not tempt the fervent as violently as they tempt the tepid priest, whom they often succeed in bringing from tepidity into the state of mortal sin. Cornelius a Lapide says that the tepid man, when assailed by any strong temptation, "in magna versatur periculo, sæpeque inter tot occasiones hojus vitæ in mortale prolabitur."—In Apoc., iii. 15. The tepid are in great danger of yielding to temptations, because they have but little strength to resist. Hence it is, that in so many occasions of danger, they often fall into mortal sin.

13. It is necessary then to labour to avoid faults which are wilfully and deliberately committed. It cannot be denied that, except Jesus Christ and the divine Mother, who by a singular privilege have been free from all stain of sin, all other men, even the saints, have not been exempt at least from venial sins. "Cœli," says Job, "non sunt mundi in conspectu ejus."—Job. xv. 15. St. James says, "In multis offendimus omnes."—Ephes. iii. 2. Thus every child of Adam must, as St. Leo has written, be defiled with the mire of this earth: "necesse est . . . . . de mundano pulvere etiam corda religiosa sordescere."—Serm. 4, de quad. But it is necessary to attend to what the Wise Man says on this subject: "Septies

cadet justus, et resurget."—Prov., xxiv. 16. He who falls through human frailty, without a full knowledge of the malice of the act, and without a deliberate consent, rises easily: "cadet et resurget." But how can he rise who knows his defects, commits them deliberately, and instead of detesting them, takes complacency in them? "Etsi non sumus sine peccatis," says St. Augustine, "oderimus tamen ea."—De verb., Ap. serm. 29, cap. 6. If we commit faults, let us at least confess and detest them, and God will pardon them: "Si confiteamur peccata nostra, fidelis est Deus, et justus ut remittat."—1 John, i. 9. To obtain the remission of venial faults, Blosius says that it is enough to confess them in general: "Sane tales culpas generaliter exposuisse satis est."—De Consol. pusil., sec. 2. And in another place he writes, that such sins are more easily cancelled by turning to God with humility and love, than by stopping to dwell upon them with too much fear. St. Francis de Sales also has written, that as the daily faults of spiritual souls are indeliberately committed, so they are indeliberately taken away. He meant to say what St. Thomas teaches, that for the remission of venial sins, "sufficit actus quo aliquis detestatur peccatum explicite aut implicite, sicut cum aliquis ferventer movetur in Deum." The holy Doctor then says: "Triplici ratione aliqua causant remissionem venialium. Primo, per infusionem gratiæ; et hoc modo per Eucharistiam, et omnia sacramenta, venialia remittuntur. Secundo, in quantum sunt cum aliquo motu detestationis; et hoc modo, confessio generalis, tunsio pectoris, et oratio dominica operantur ad remissionem. Tertio, in quantum sunt cum aliquo moto reverentiæ in Deum, et ad res divinas; et hoc modo benedictio episcopi, aspersio aquæ benedictæ oratio in ecclesia dedicata, et talia hujusmodi operantur ad remissionem venialium."—3. p., q. 87, art. 3, Speaking of the holy communion, St. Bernardine of Sienna says, "Contingere potest quod tanta devotione mens per sumptionem sacramenti absorbeatur, quod ab omnibus venialibus expurgetur."—Serm. 45, art. 3, c. 2.

14. The venerable Lewis da Ponte used to say, "I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with my faults. Many make peace with their defects, and this shall cause their ruin." St. Bernard says that as long as a person detests his imperfections, there is reason to hope that he shall return to the strait path; but when he commits faults knowingly and deliberately, and when the commission of them excites neither fear nor remorse, they shall by degrees bring him to ruin. "Dying flies," says the Holy Ghost, "spoil the sweetness of the ointment: Perdunt suavitatem unguenti."—Eccl., x. 1.—Dying flies are the faults which are committed but not detested; for they remain dead in the soul. "Dum musca," says Denis the Carthusian, "cadit in unguentum manendo in illo, destruet ejus valorem et odorem. Spiritualiter muscæ morientes sunt cogitationes vanæ, affectiones illicitæ, distractiones morosæ, quæ perdunt suavitatem unguenti, id est dulcedinem spiritualium exercitiorum."

15. St. Bernard writes, that to say this is a *light sin*, is not a great evil, but to commit it, and take complacency in it, is an evil of great moment, and shall, according to the words of St. Luke, be severely chastised by God. "And that servant that knew the will of his Lord, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."—Luke, xii. 47, 48. It is true that even spiritual persons are not free from light transgressions; "but," says Father Alvares, "they daily diminish the number and grievousness of their faults, and afterwards efface them by acts of divine love." Whoever acts in this manner, shall acquire sanctity: neither shall his defects hinder him to tend to perfection. Hence Blosius tells us not to be disheartened by these little faults, because we have several means of expiating them: "Quemadmodum," he says, "singulis diebus in multis offendimus, ita quotidianas expiationes habemus." But how can he who entertains an attachment for any earthly good, and voluntarily falls and relapses into that attachment without

any wish to get rid of it, advance in the way of God? The bird that escapes from the net, instantly takes flight; but as long as it is held even by a slender thread, it remains on the earth. "Every little thread of attachment to this world," says St. John of the Cross, "impedes the spiritual progress of the soul."

16. Let us, then, guard against falling into this miserable state of tepidity; for, according to what has been already said, to raise a priest from such a state, a most powerful grace is necessary. But what reason have we to think that God will give such a grace to priests who provoke him to vomit them out of his mouth? Some person who has fallen into this miserable state may ask, is there, then, no hope for me? There is ground of hope in the mercy and power of God. "Quæ impossibilia sunt apud homines, possibilia sunt apud Deum."—Lucæ, xviii. 27. It is impossible for the tepid priest to rise, but to raise him up is not impossible to God. However, a desire, at least, is necessary on our part. How can he who does not even desire to rise, hope for the divine aid? Let him who has not even this desire ask it of God. If we pray, and persevere in prayer, the Lord shall grant both the desire and the grace to rise. *Petite et accipietis.* God has promised, and his promise cannot fail. Let us, then, pray, and say with St. Augustine, "Meritum meum, misericordia tua." Lord, I have no claim or merit to be heard by you, but, O Eternal Father, your mercy and the merits of Jesus Christ, are my merits. To have recourse to the most holy Virgin is also a great means of rising from a state of tepidity.

17. Incontinence is called by St. Basil, a living plague, and by St. Bernardine of Sienna, the most noxious of all sins. "Vermis quo nullus nocentior." Because, as St. Bonaventure says, impurity destroys the germs of all virtues. Hence St. Ambrose calls it the seminary and mother of all vices: "Luxuria seminarium est te origo omnium vitiorum." For it brings with it hatred, thefts, sacrileges, and other similar vices. Hence St. Remigius has justly said:

"Exceptis parvulis, major pars hominum ob hoc vitium damnantur." And Father Paul Segneri says that as pride has filled hell with angels, so impurity has filled it with men. In other vices the devil fishes with the hook, in this he fishes with the net; so that by incontinence he gains more for hell than by all other sins. On the other hand, God has inflicted the severest chastisement on the world, sending deluges of water and fire from heaven, in punishment of the sin of incontinence.

18. Chastity is a most beautiful gem; but, as St. Athanasius says, it is a gem found by few on this earth: "Gemma pretiosissima a paucis inventa." But if this gem becomes seculars, it is absolutely necessary for ecclesiastics. Among the virtues which St. Paul prescribed to Timothy, he recommended chastity in a special manner: "Teipsum castum custodi."—Tim., v. 22. Origen says that chastity is the first virtue with which a priest who goes to the altar should be adorned: "Ante omnia sacerdos, qui divinis assistit altaribus castitate debet accingi." Clement of Alexandria has written that they alone who lead a chaste life are and can be called priests: "Soli qui puram habent vitam sunt Dei sacerdotes."—Lib. 3, Stromat. Hence, then, as purity constitutes priests, so, on the other hand, incontinence robs them, as it were, of their dignity. "Si pudicitia," says St. Isidore, sacerdotes creat, libido sacerdotibus dignitatem abrogat."—Lib. 3, Ep. 75. Hence the holy Church has always endeavoured by so many councils, laws, and admonitions, to guard with jealousy the chastity of her priests. Innocent III, made the following ordinance: "Nemo ad sacrum ordinem permittatur accedere, nisi aut virgo aut probatæ castitatis existat."—Cap. A multis de ætate et qual. ord. He also commanded that the incontinent ecclesiastic should be excluded: "ab omnium graduum dignitate." St. Gregory ordained: "Qui post acceptum sacrum ordinem lapsus in peccatum carnis fuerit, sacro ordine ita careat ut ad altaris ministerium non accedat."—In cap. pervenit, dist. 50. Besides, St. Sylvester ordained that if a priest committed a sin

against purity, he should do penance for ten years. For the first three months, he should sleep on the ground, remain in solitude, have no intercourse with any person, and should be deprived of communion. He should then fast every day for a year and a half on bread and water, and for the remainder of the ten years, he should continue to fast on bread and water only on three days in the week.—Can. Presb. dist. 82. In a word, the Church regards as a monster, the priest who does not lead a life of chastity.

19. Let us, in the first place, examine the malice of the sin of a priest who violates chastity. A priest is the temple of God, as well by the vow of chastity, as by the sacred unction by which he was consecrated to God: "Unxit nos Deus qui et signavit nos."—2 Cor., i. 21. Such the language of St. Paul, speaking of himself and of his associates in the ministry. Hence Cardinal Hugo has said: "Sacerdos ne polluat sanctuarium Domini; quia oleum sanctæ unctionis super eum est." The body, then, of the priest is the sanctuary of the Lord. "Teipsum castum custodi," says St. Ignatius, Martyr, "ut domum Dei, templum Christi."—Ep. 10, ad Honor. Diacon. St. Peter Damian says that the priest who defiles his body by impurity, violates the temple of God: "Nonne templum Dei violant?"—Opus. 18, d. 2, c. 3. He then adds: "Nolite vasa Deo sacrata in vasa contumeliæ veretere." What would you say, of the man who should use a consecrated chalice at table? Speaking of priests, Innocent III has said: "Cum ipsi templum et sacrarium Spiritus Sancti, esse debeant indignum est eos immunditiis deservire." How horrible to see a priest who should send forth in every direction the light and odour of purity, become sordid, fetid, and polluted with sins of the flesh? "Sus lota in volutabro luti."—2 Pet., ii. 22. Hence Clement of Alexandria has written that an unchaste priest, as far as in him lies, contaminates God himself, who dwells within him: "Deum in ipsis habitantem corrumpunt, quantum in se est, et vitiorum suorum conjunctione polluunt."—Pedag., Lib. 2, c. 10. Of this God himself complains by the mouth of his prophet:

"Sacerdotes ejus contempserunt legem meam et polluerunt sanctuaria mea.....et coinquinabar in medio eorum."—Ezech., xxii. 26. Alas! says the Lord, by the incontinence of my priest, I, too, am defiled: by violating chastity he pollutes my sanctuary, that is, his body which I have consecrated, and in which I often come to dwell. It was this St. Jerome meant when he said: "Polluimus corpus Christi quando indigne accedimus ad altare."—In cap. 1, Mal.

20. Besides, the priest on the altar offers to God in sacrifice the immaculate Lamb; that is, the very Son of God. On this account, says St. Jerome, the priest should be so chaste as not only to abstain from every impure action, but also to avoid every indecent glance: "Pudicitia sacerdotis non solum ab opere immundo sed etiam a jactu oculi sit libera."—In cap. 1, Ep. ad Tit. St. Chrysostom likewise has written that a priest should have purity which would make him fit to stand in the midst of the angels in heaven: "Necesse est sacerdotem sic esse purum, ut, si in ipsis cœlis esset collocatus inter cœlestes illas virtutes staret."—De Sacerd., lib. 3, cap. 4. And in another place he has said that by their purity the hands of a priest, which must touch the flesh of Jesus Christ, should be more resplendent than the rays of the sun: "Quos solares radios non debent excedere manus quæ hanc carnem tractant."—Hom. 3, in Mat. On the other hand, St. Augustine asks where can a man be found so wicked as to presume to touch the most holy sacrament of the altar with unclean hands: "Quis adeo impius erit qui lutosis manibus sacratissimum sacramentum tractare præsumat?"—Serm., 244, de temp. "But," says St. Bernard, "the priest who dares to ascend the altar, to handle the body of Jesus Christ, after being contaminated with sins of impurity, is guilty of a far more enormous crime: "Audent, agni immaculati sacras contingere carnes, et intingere in sanguinem Salvatoris, manus quibus paulo ante carnes attractaverunt."—In declam. "Ah! priest of God," exclaims St. Augustine, "ne manus quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi, polluantur sanguine peccati."

—Serm. 37, Tract. ad Her. Ah! do not allow the hands which are bathed in the blood of the Redeemer, shed one day for the love of you, to be polluted with the sacrilegious blood of sin.

21. Moreover, Cassian says that priests must not only touch, but also eat, the sacred flesh of the Lamb; and therefore they should practise angelic purity: "Qua puritate oportebit custodire castitatem quos necesse est quotidie sacrosanctis agni carnibus vesci!" —Lib. 6, c. 8. But according to Peter Blessensis, the priest who, while he is defiled with sins against chastity, pronounces the words of consecration, spits, as it were, in the face of Jesus Christ; and in receiving the sacred body and blood into his polluted mouth, he, as it were, casts them into the foulest mire: "Qui sacra illa verba sacramenti, ore immundo profert in faciem Salvatoris spuit; et cum in os immundum sacratissimam carnem ponit, eam quasi in lutum projicit."—Serm. 38. St. Vincent Ferrer says that such a priest is guilty of a greater impiety than if he threw the consecrated host into a sink: "Majus peccatum est, quam si projiceret corpus Christi in cloacam." Here St. Peter Damian exclaims and says, "O priest! whose duty it is to offer to God the immaculate Lamb, do not first immolate yourself to the devil by your impurities: "O sacerdos qui debes offerre, noli prius teipsum maligno spiritui victimam immolare!"—De Cœl. sacrif., cap. 3. Hence the saint afterwards calls the unchaste priest a victim of the devils, on which these cruel spirits make a most delicious feast in hell: "Vos estis dæmonum victimæ ad æternæ mortis succidium destinati; et vobis diabolus tanquam delicatis dapibus pascitur et saginatur."—Lib. 4, Ep. 3. Besides, the unchaste priest not only brings himself to perdition, but he also causes the damnation of many others. St. Bernard said that incontinence in ecclesiastics was one of the greatest persecutions which the Church could suffer. On the words of Ezechias, ("ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima," —apud Isa., xxxviii. 17,) the saint weeps and says: "Amare prius in nece martyrum; amarior in conflictu hæreticorum; amarissima in luxuria ecclesiasticorum.

Pax est; et non est pax. Pax a paganis; pax ab hæreticis; et non est pax a filius; filii propriam matrem eviscerant." The Church, says the holy doctor, has suffered much from the sword of the tyrant and from the infection of heresy, but she suffers still more from the incontinence of the unchaste ecclesiastic, who by his scandals drags the bowels out of his own mother. "How shameful," says St. Peter Damian, "to see a man who preaches chastity, made the slave of lust: "Qui prædicator es castitatis, non te pudet esse servus libidinis?"

22. Let us now examine the evils which the vice of incontinence produces in the soul, particularly in that of a priest. First, this sin blinds the soul, and makes her lose sight of God and of the eternal truths. "Castitas," says St. Augustine, "mundans mentes hominum præstat videre Deum."—Serm. 249, de temp. But the first effect of the vice of impurity is, according to St. Thomas, blindness of the understanding. Its effects are thus described by the saint: "Cæcitas mentis, odium Dei, affectus præsentis sæculi, horror futuri."—2. 2. q. 153, art. 4. St. Augustine has said that impurity takes away the thought of eternity: "Luxuria, futura non sinit cogitare." When a raven finds a dead body, its first act is to pluck out the eyes; and the first injury which incontinence inflicts on the soul is to take away the light of the things of God. This was felt by Calvin, who was first a parish priest—a pastor of souls—but afterwards, by this vice, became an heresiarch; by Henry VIII, first the defender, and afterwards the persecutor of the Church. This was also experienced by Solomon; first a saint, and afterwards an idolater. The same happens to the unchaste priest. "They shall," says the Prophet Sophonias, "walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord."—i. 17. Miserable man! in the midst of the light of the Masses which he celebrates, of the offices which he recites, and of the funerals which he attends, he remains as blind as if he believed neither in death which awaits him, nor in a future judgment, nor in hell which he purchases by his sins. "Mayest thou," says the Lord, "grope at

midday as the blind is wont to grope in the dark."—Deut., xxviii. 29. In a word, he is so blinded by the fetid mire in which he is immersed, that after having forsaken God who has raised him so much above others, he does not even think of returning to ask pardon. "Non dabunt," says the Prophet Osee, "cogitationes suas, ut revertantur ad Deum suum; quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum."—v. 4. Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that neither the admonitions of superiors, nor the counsels of virtuous friends, nor the fear of chastisements, nor the danger of shame, shall be sufficient to enlighten the unchaste priest. "Nec admonitiones, nec consilia, nec aliquid aliud salvare potest animam libidine periclitantem."—Hom. contra Lux.

23. No wonder: for he is so blind that he can no longer see. "Supercecidit ignis, et non viderunt solem."—Ps. lvii. 9. "Supercecidit ignis libidinis," says St. Thomas. Hence he afterwards adds, "vitia carnalia extinguunt judicium rationis, quia luxuria, totam animam trahit ad delectationem."—2. 2. q. 53, a. 6, ad 3. This vice, by its beastly delectation, deprives man even of reason; so that, as Eusebius says, it makes him become worse than the senseless beast: "Luxuria, hominem pejorem bestia facit." Hence the unchaste priest, blinded by his impurities, shall no longer make any account of the injuries which he does to God by his sacrileges, nor of the scandal which he gives to others. He will even go so far as to dare to say Mass in the state of sin. No wonder: for he who has lost the light, easily abandons himself to the commission of every crime.

24. "Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini."—Ps. xxxiii. 6. He who wants light must draw near to God; but because, according to the words of St. Thomas, (per luxuriam homo maxime recedit a Deo,—1. 2. q. 37, a. 5.) impurity removes man to a great distance from God, the unchaste becomes, as it were, senseless brutes that no longer apprehend spiritual things. "Animalis homo," says St. Paul, "non percipit ea, quæ sunt spiritus Dei."—1 Cor., ii. 14. Hell, eternity, and the dignity of the priesthood, no longer make

any impression upon the incontinent ecclesiastic: *non percipit.* Perhaps he will, as St. Ambrose says, begin even to entertain doubts about faith: "Ubi cœperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviare a vera fide."—Epist. 1, ad Sabin. Oh! how many miserable priests have, by this vice, even lost their faith? "Ossa ejus," says Job, "implebuntur vitiis adolescentiæ ejus, (the vices of youth are impurities) et cum eo in pulvere dormient."—xx. 11. As the light of the sun cannot enter into a vessel filled with earth, so the light of God cannot shine into a soul habituated to sins of the flesh: her vices shall continue to sleep with her till death.

25. But as that unhappy soul, for the sake of her impurities, forgets God, so shall he forget her, and permit her to remain abandoned in her darkness. "Quia oblitus es mei," says the Lord, "et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas." Ezech., xxiii. 35. St. Peter Damian says, "Illi, Deum post corpus suum projiciunt, qui suarum obtemperant illecebris voluptatum."—Op., 18, diss. 2, cap. 3. Father Cataneo relates that a sinner who had contracted a habit of impurity, when admonished by a friend to abandon his evil ways, unless he wished to be damed, answered: "Friend, I may indeed go to hell for this habit." He certainly went to that place of torment, for he was suddenly struck dead. A priest who was found in the house of a certain lady whom he went to tempt, was compelled by her husband to take a poisonous draught. After returning home he took to his bed, and mentioned to a friend the misfortune that had befallen him. The friend seeing the miserable man so near his end, exhorted him to go to confession. No: replied the unhappy man, I cannot go to confession; this favour only I ask of you, go to such a lady, tell her that I die for the love of her. Can greater blindness be conceived?

26. In the second place, the sin of impurity produces obstinacy of the will. "Hac rete diaboli," says St. Jerome, "si quis capitur non cito solvitur." And according to St. Thomas, there is no sin in which the

devil takes so much delight as in impurity; because the flesh is strongly inclined to that vice, and he who falls into it, can be rescued from it only with difficulty. "Diabolus debet maxime gaudere, de peccato luxuria, quia est maxime inhærentiæ, et difficile ab eo homo potest eripi."—1. 2. q. 73, a. 5, ad 2. Hence the vice of incontinence has been called by Clement of Alexandria *morbus immedicabiles;* and by Tertullian, *vitium immutabile.* Hence St. Cyprian calls it the mother of impenitence: "Impudicitia mater est impœnitentiæ." "It is impossible," says Peter Blessensis, "for him who submits to the domination of the flesh, to conquer carnal temptations:" "Est fere impossibile triumphare de carne, si ipsa de nobis triumphat." Father Biderman relates of a young man, who was in the habit of relapsing into this sin, that at the hour of death he confessed his sins with many tears and died, leaving strong grounds to hope for his salvation. But on the following day his confessor, while saying Mass, felt some one pulling the chausible; turning round he saw a dark cloud, which sent forth scintillations of fire, and heard a voice saying that was the soul of the young man who had died; that though he had been absolved from his sins, he was again tempted, yielded to a bad thought, and was damned.

27. "Propheta.....et sacerdos pollutisunt. Idcirco via eorum erit quasi lubricum in tenebris; impellentur enim, et corruent in ea."—Jer., xxiii. 11, 12. Behold the ruin of the unchaste ecclesiastic. He walks on a slippery path, in the midst of darkness, and is impelled to the precipice by the devils, and by evil habits. Hence it is impossible for him to escape destruction. St. Augustine says that they who give themselves up to this vice, soon contract the habit of it; and the habit soon creates, as it were, a necessity of sinning: "Dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo et dum consuetudini non resistitur facta est necessitas."—Conf., lib. 8, c. 5. The vulture rather than abandon the carcase on which it has begun to feed, is content to wait to be killed by the sportsman. This happens to him who contracts a habit of impurity. Oh! how

much greater the obstinacy produced in the priest who submits to the tyrrannical rule of this vice, than that which it causes in seculars. This happens both, because the priest has had greater light to know the malice of mortal sin, and because in him impurity is a greater sin than it is in a secular. For the unchaste priest not only offends against chastity, but also against religion, by violating his vow, and, generally speaking, he also transgresses against fraternal charity. For, the incontinence of a priest is almost always accompanied with most grievous scandal to others. In his book on the last things, (ar. 47.) Denis the Carthusian relates, that a servant of God, conducted in spirit to purgatory, saw there many seculars who were suffering for sins against purity, but very few priests. Having asked the reason, he was told that scarcely any unchaste priest repents sincerely of this sin, and that, therefore, almost all such priests are damned: "Vix aliquis talium habet veram contritionem; idcirco pene omnes damnantur."

28. Finally, this accursed vice leads all, and particularly priests who are infected with it, to eternal damnation. St. Peter Damian says that the altar of God receives no other fire than that of divine love. Hence he who dares to ascend the altar inflamed by the fire of impurity, is consumed by the fire of divine vengeance: "Altaria Domini non alienum, sed duntaxat ignem divini amoris accipiunt, quisquis igitur carnalis concupiscentiæ flamma æstuat et assistere altaribus non formidat, ille divinæ ultionis igne consumitur."—Op. c. 27, de com. vit. And in another place he says that all the obscenities of the sinner shall be one day converted into pitch, which shall eternally nourish in his bowels the fire of hell: "Veniet, veniet profecto dies, immo nox, quando libido ista tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuis ignis in tuis visceribus inextinguibiliter, nutriat."—Idem. Op. 17, de cœl. sac.

29. Oh! what vengeance does not the Lord inflict on the unchaste priest? How many priests are now in hell for sins against purity? "If," says St. Peter Damian, "the man in the Gospel, who came to the

marriage feast without the nuptial garment, was condemned to darkness, "Quid illi sperandum qui cœlestibus tricliniis intromissis non modo non est spiritualis indumenti decore conspicuus, sed ultro etiam fœtet sordentis luxuriæ squallore perfusus?"—Opusc. 18, diss. 1, cap. 4. Baronius relates (anno 110,) that a priest who had contracted a habit of sins against chastity, saw at death, a multitude of devils coming to carry him away. He turned to a religious who was attending him, and besought him to pray for him. But soon after he exclaimed that he was before the tribunal of God, and cried aloud: "Cease, cease to pray for me, for I am already condemned, and your prayers can be of no service to me:" "Cessa pro me orare; pro quo nullatenus exaudieris." St. Peter Damian relates that in the city of Parma, a priest and a woman with whom he had sinned, were suddenly struck dead.—Lib. 5, ep. 16. In the revelations of St. Bridget we read that an unchaste priest was killed by a thunderbolt; and it was found that the lightning had reduced to ashes only the indelicate members, and left the remainder of the body untouched, as if to show that it was principally for incontinence that God had inflicted this chastisement upon him. Another priest in our own time, died suddenly in the act of committing a sin against chastity, and for his greater infamy was exposed in the court of the church. The unchaste priest dishonours the Church, and therefore the Lord justly chastises him by making him the most dishonoured of all men. Thus, speaking of priests, God says, by the Prophet Malachy, "But you have departed out of the way, and have caused many to stumble at the law.....therefore I also made you contemptible, and base before all people."—Mal., ii. 8, 9.

30. The spiritual masters point out many remedies for the vice of impurity; but the principal and the most necessary are the flight of occasions and prayer. As to the first means, St. Philip Neri used to say that in this warfare cowards, that is, they who avoid dangerous occasions, gain the victory. Let a man use all other possible means, unless he flies away he is

lost. "Qui amat periculum, in illo peribit."—Eccl., iii. 27. As to the second means, it is necessary to know that we have not strength to resist temptations of the flesh. This strength must be the gift of God. But God grants it to them only who pray and ask for it. The only defence against this temptation, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, is prayer: "Oratio pudicitiæ præsidium est." And before him, the Wise Man said: "Et ut scivi quoniam aliter non possum esse continens, nisi Deus det.....adii Dominum et deprecatus sum illum."—Sap., viii. 21.

[They who desire more information on the means of overcoming sins of the flesh, and especially on the two means above mentioned—the avoidance of occasions and prayer—may read the instruction on chastity in the second part of this volume.]

31. "Necessario fatemur," says the holy Council of Trent, "nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse quam hoc tremendum mysterium."—Sess. 22, decr. de obser. in cel. Miss. God himself could not enable man to perform a more sublime or sacred action than the celebration of Mass. Oh! how much more excellent than all the ancient sacrifices is our sacrifice of the altar, in which we immolate not an ox, nor a lamb, but the very Son of God? "Habuit bovem Judæus," says St. Peter of Cluni, "habet Christum Christianus, cujus sacrificium tanto excellentius quanto Christus bove major est."—Epis. contra Petrobusian. ap. Bib. P.P. tom. 22. The Jews had an ox, the Christians have Christ: the sacrifice of the latter as far transcends that of the former, as Christ is more excellent than an ox. The same author adds, that to servants a servile victim was suited, but for friends and children was reserved Jesus Christ—a victim that has delivered us from sin and eternal death: "Congrua tunc fuit servillis hostia servis; servata est liberatrix victima jam filiis et amicis." Justly, then, has St. Laurence Justinian said, that there is no oblation greater, more profitable to us, or more pleasing to God, than the offering which is made in the sacrifice of the Mass: "Sacra Missæ oblatione nulla major, nulla utilior, nulla oculis divinæ

majestatis est gratior."—Ser. de Corp. Christi. According to St. John Chrysostom, during the celebration of Mass, the altar is surrounded by angels, who assist to pay homage to Jesus Christ, the victim offered in sacrifice: "Locus altari vicinus plenus est angelorum choris in honorem illius, qui immolatur."—Lib. 6, de Sacerd., cap. 4. And St. Gregory asks, "who doubts that at the very hour of immolation, at the voice of the priest, the heavens are opened and that choirs of angels are present at that mystery of Jesus Christ."—Dial., lib. 4, c. 5. St. Augustine says that the angels assist as servants to the priest who offers the sacrifice: "Sacerdos enim hic ineffabile conficit mysterium, et angeli conficienti sibi quasi famuli assistunt."—In Ps. 77.

32. Now the Council of Trent teaches that Jesus Christ himself was the first who offered this great sacrifice of his body and blood, and that he now offers himself by the hands of a priest chosen to be his minister and representative on the altar: "Idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit."—Sess. 22, c. 2. St. Cyprian says that "the priest truly holds the place of Christ," (Ep. 66. ad Cec.) and that, therefore, at the consecration, he says *This is my body: this is the chalice of my blood.* To his disciples Jesus himself said, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."—Luke, x. 16. The priests of the Old Law, the Lord commanded to be clean, merely because it was their duty to carry the sacred vessels: "Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord."—Isa., lii. 11. "How much more clean," says Peter Blessensis, "should they be who carry Christ in their hands and in their body?"—Epis. 123. How much greater purity shall God demand from the priests of the New Law, who must represent the person of Jesus Christ on the altar, in offering to the eternal Father his own very Son? Justly, then, does the Council of Trent require that priests celebrate this sacrifice with the greatest possible purity of conscience. "Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse ut quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia

(hoc mysterium) peragatur."—Sess. 22, cit. decr. de ob., &c. This, says the Abbot Rupert, is what is signified by the *Alb* with which the Church commands the priest to be covered from head to foot in the celebration of the holy mysteries. "Candorem significat vitæ innocentis, quæ a sacerdote debet incipere."

33. It is but just that priests should honour God by innocence of life, since he has honoured them so much above others, by making them the ministers of this great mystery. "Behold, O priests," says St. Francis of Assisium, "your dignity; and as the Lord has honoured you on account of this mystery, so be careful on your part to love and to honour him." But how shall a priest honour God? Is it by the costliness or vanity of his dress? No, says St. Bernard, but by sanctity of life, by the study of the sacred sciences, and by labour in holy works: "Honorabilis autem non in cultu vestium, sed ornatis moribus, studiis spiritualibus, operibusque bonis."—Ep. 42. But does the priest who celebrates in mortal sin, give honour to God? As far as regards himself, he treats the Lord with the greatest dishonour that can be offered to him, by despising him in his own person. For by his sacrilege he appears as far as in him lies, to defile the immaculate Lamb, whom he immolates in the consecrated host. "To you, O priests," says the Lord by the Prophet Malachy, "who despise my name . . . . . you offer polluted bread upon my altar, and you say, wherein have we polluted thee?"—i. 6, 7. "We," says St. Jerome, in his comment on this passage, "pollute the bread, that is, the body of Christ, when we unworthily approach the altar."—In Mal., c. 1. God cannot raise a man to a greater elevation than by conferring on him the sacerdotal dignity. How many selections must the Lord have made in calling a person to the priesthood. First, he must select him from a countless number of possible creatures. He must then separate him from so many millions of pagans and heretics, and, lastly, he must make choice of him from the immense multitude of the faithful. And what power does God confer on this man? If the Lord bestowed only on

one man the power of calling down by his words the Son of God from heaven, how great should be his obligations and his gratitude to the Lord? This power God grants to every priest. "Lifting up the poor out of the dunghill, that he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people."—Ps. cxii. 7, 8. The number of persons to whom God has given this power does not diminish the dignity or the obligations of the priesthood. But what does the priest do, who celebrates in the state of sin? He dishonours and despises the Lord, by declaring that so great a sacrifice is not deserving of the reverence which would make him dread the sacrilegious oblation of it. "Qui," says St. Cyril, "non adhibet honorem altari sancto factis testatur illud esse contemptibile."—Ap. Mol. instr., &c., tr. 2, c. 18.

34. The hand, says St. Chrysostom, that touches the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, and the tongue that is purpled with his divine blood, should be purer than the rays of the sun: "Quo igitur solari radio non puriorem esse oportet, manum carnem hanc dividentem? linguam quæ tremendo nimis sanguine erubescit."—Hom. 83, in Matth. In another place he says that a priest ascending the altar, should be possessed of purity and sanctity, which would merit for him a place in the midst of the angels: "Nonne accedentem ad altare sacerdotem sic purum esse oportet, ac si in ipsis cœlis collocatus inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret?"—De Sacer., lib. 6, c. 4. How great, then, must be the horror of the angels when they behold a priest, who is the enemy of God, stretching forth his sacrilegious hands to touch and eat the immaculate Lamb? "Who," exclaims St. Augustine, "shall be so wicked and daring as to touch the most holy sacrament with polluted hands: Quis adeo impius erit qui lutosis manibus sacratissimum sacramentum tractare præsumat?"—Serm. 244, de temp. Still more wicked is the priest who celebrates Mass with a soul defiled by mortal sin. God turns away his eyes that he may not behold such horrible impiety. "When," says the Lord, "you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes . . . . . for your

hands are full of blood."—Isa., 1. 15. To express the disgust which he feels at the sight of such sacrilegious priests, the Lord declares that he will scatter the dung of their sacrifices over their faces: "I will scatter upon your face the dung of your solemnities."—Malac., ii. 3. It is true, as the Council of Trent teaches, that the holy sacrifice cannot be contaminated by the malice of priests. "Hæc quidem illa munda oblatio est quæ nulla malitia offerentium inquinari potest."—Sess. 22, cap. 1. However, priests who celebrate in the state of sin, defile, as far as in them lies, the sacred mystery, and therefore the Lord declares that he is, as it were, polluted by their abominations. "Her priests have defiled my sanctuaries . . . . . and I was profaned in the midst of them."—Ezec., xxii., 26.

35. Alas! O Lord, exclaims St. Bernard, how does it happen that some of those who hold a high place in your Church are the first to persecute you: "Heu! Domine Deus, quia ipsi sunt in persecutione tua primi qui videntur in ecclesia tua gerere principatum?"—Serm. in conver. S. Paul. This is, indeed, too true, as St. Cyprian says. A priest who celebrates Mass in the state of sin, insults with his mouth and hands the very body of Christ: "Vis infertur corpori Domini, et ore et manibus in Dominum deliquimus."—Ser. de lapsis. Another author adds that the priest who pronounces the words of consecration in the state of sin, spits, as it were, in the face of Jesus Christ; and when he receives the most holy sacrament into his unhallowed mouth, he, as it were, casts the body and blood of Jesus Christ into the mire: "Qui sacra illa verba ore immundo profert, in faciem Salvatoris spuit; et cum in os immundum sanctissimam carnem ponit, eum quasi in lutum projicit."—Petrus Comestor, apud Bibl. Patrum, tom. 24. But why do I say that he casts Jesus Christ into the mire? The soul of a priest in sin is worse than mire; and, as Theophilactus says, the mire is not so unworthy of receiving the divine flesh as the heart of a sacrilegious priest: "Lutum non adeo indignum est corpore divino quam indigna est carnis

tuæ impuritas."—In Heb., xx. 16. The sacrilegious priest, then, says St. Vincent Ferrer, is guilty of greater impiety than if he cast the most holy sacrament into a sink: Majus peccatum est quam si projiceret corpus Christi in cloacam." Such, too, is the doctrine of St. Thomas of Villinova: "Quantum flagitium, in spurcissimam tui corporis cloacam Christi sanguinem projicere."—In conc. de cor. Christ.

36. The sins of a priest are always most grievous on account of the injury which they do to God, who has chosen him for his own minister, and has heaped so many favours upon him. It is one thing, says St. Peter Damain, to violate the laws of a sovereign, and another to strike him with your own hands. This is what the priest does who offers sacrifice in the state of mortal sin. "It is one thing to transgress edicts which the king has promulgated, and another to wound him with our own hands. No one sins more grievously than the priest who offers sacrifice unworthily. When we sin in any other way, we, as it were, injure God in his property, but when we unworthily offer sacrifice, we dare to lay violent hands upon his person."—Epis. 26, c. 2. This was the sin of the Jews who had the daring audacity to offer violence to the person of Jesus Christ. But St. Augustine teaches that the sin of the priest who offers sacrifice unworthily is still more grievous: "Gravius peccant indigne offerentes Christum regnantem in cœlis, quam qui eum crucifixerunt ambulantem in terris."—In Ps. lxvii. 22. The Jews did not know the Redeemer as priests do. Besides, as Tertullian says, the Jews laid hands on Jesus Christ only once, but the sacrilegious priest dares frequently to repeat this injurious treatment: "Semel Judæi Christo manus intulerunt, isti quotidie manus lacessunt. O manus præcidendæ!"—De Joel, vii. It is also necessary to remark, that according to the doctrine of theologians, a priest, by the sacrilegious celebration of Mass, is guilty of *four* mortal sins. First, because he consecrates in the state of sin; secondly, because he communicates in the state of sin; thirdly, because he administers the sacrament in the state of sin; and

fourthly, because he administers it to an unworthy person, that is, to himself, who is in mortal sin.—Op. Mor. 1. 6, n. 35.

37. This made St. Jerome foam, through zeal, against the Deacon Sabinian. Miserable wretch! said the holy Doctor, "how has it happened that your eyes have not grown dim; that your tongue has not been twisted; that your arms have not fallen to the ground, when you dared to assist at the altar in the state of sin: "Miser! nonne calligaverunt oculi tui, lingua torcuit, conciderunt brachia?"—Epis. ad Sab. St. Chrysostom teaches that a priest who approaches the altar with a soul stained with mortal sin, is far worse than a devil: "Multo demonio pejor est, qui peccati conscius accedit ad altare." For the devils tremble in the presence of Jesus Christ. We read in the life of St. Teresa, that when she was going to communion one day, she saw with terror a devil on each side of the priest, who celebrated Mass in the state of mortal sin. The devils trembled in the presence of the holy sacrament, and manifested a desire to fly away. From the consecrated host Jesus said to the saint, "Behold the force of the words of consecration, and see, O Teresa, my goodness, which makes me willing to place myself in the hands of my enemy for your welfare, and for the welfare of every Christian." The devils then tremble before Jesus in the holy sacrament; but the sacrilegious priest not only does not tremble, but, as St. Chrysostom says, he audaciously tramples on the Son of God in his own person. "Quando quis in ministeriis peccatum facerit; nonne eum conculcat?"—Hom. 20, in Liturg. In the sacrilegious priest are verified the words of the apostle: "How much more do you think, he deserveth worse punishments, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, by which he was sanctified?"—Heb., x. 29. Then, in the presence of that God, at whose beck, "the pillars of heaven tremble, and the whole earth, and all things in it are moved," (Job. 26.,) a worm of the earth dares to trample on the blood of the Son of God.

38. But, alas! what greater calamity can befall a priest than to change redemption into perdition; sacrifice into sacrilege, and life into death? Great, indeed, was the impiety of the Jews, who drew blood from the side of Jesus Christ; but far greater is the impiety of the priest who receives from the chalice the same blood, and insults it. "Quam perditus est," says Peter Blessensis, "ille qui redemptionem in perditionem, qui sacrificium in sacrilegium, qui vitam convertit in mortem? Verbum B. Hieronymi est; perfidus Judæus, perfidus Christianus; ille de latere, iste de calice sanguinem Christi fundit." Of such priests our Lord complained one day to St. Bridget, saying, "The crucify my body more cruelly than the Jews did."—Rev., lib. 4, c. 133. A learned author says that the priest who celebrates in the state of sin, is guilty, as it were, of murdering before the eyes of the eternal Father, his own son: "Ne, si peccatis obnoxii offerant, illorum oblatio fiat quasi qua victimat filium in conspectu Patris."—Durandus de rit., lib. 2, c. 42, sec. 4.

39. Oh! what an impious treason. Behold how Jesus Christ complains, by the mouth of David, of the sacrilegious priest: "For, if my enemy hath reviled me, I would verily have borne with it . . . . . but thou, a man of one mind, and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me."—Ps. liv. 13—15. Behold an exact description of a priest who offers Mass in the state of sin. If my enemy, said the Lord, had insulted me, I would have borne the offence with less pain; but you whom I have made my familiar, my minister, a prince among my people, to whom I have so often given my flesh for food; you have sold me to the devil for the indulgence of passion, for a beastly gratification, for a little earth. Of this sacrilegious treason the Lord complained to St. Bridget: "Such priests," he said, "are not my priests, but real traitors; for, like Judas, they sell and betray me."—Rev. 1. 1, c. 47. St. Bernard teaches that such priests are even worse than Judas; because Judas betrayed the Saviour to the Jews, but they deliver him up to devils, by receiving him into their

sacrilegious breasts, which are ruled by devils: "Juda traditore deteriores effecti, eo quod sicut ille tradidit Jesum Judæis, ita isti tradunt diabolis, eo quod illum ponunt in loco sub potestate diaboli consituto."—Ser. 55, art. 1, cap. 3. Peter Comestor observes that when a sacrilegious priest commences the prayer "Aufer a nobis iniquitates nostras," &c., and kisses the altar, Jesus appears to reproach him and say: Judas, do you betray me with a kiss? "Nonne Christus potest stare et dicere: Juda, osculo filium hominis tradis?"—Serm. 42, in Synod. And when the priest, says St. Gregory, extends his arm to communicate, I think I hear the Redeemer say, what he said to Judas, 'behold the hand that betrays me, is with me on the altar:' "Christus dum traditur dicit: Ecce manus tradentis me mecum est in mensa." Hence, according to St. Isidore, the sacrilegious priest is, like Judas, entirely possessed by the devil. "In iis qui peccant, nec sacrosancta mysteria contingere verentur, totus Dæmon se insinuat . . . . . quod et in proditore quoque fecitt."—Ep. 364, ad Himmal.

40. Ah! the blood of Jesus Christ, so much insulted, cries more powerfully for vengeance against the sacrilegious priest, than the blood of Abel did against Cain. This, Jesus himself declared to Saint Bridget: "Sanguis meus plus clamat vindictam, quam Sanguis Abel." Oh! what horror must God and his angels feel at the sight of a sacrilegious mass! This horror, the Lord made known, in the following manner, in the year 1688, to his servant, sister Mary, crucified of Palma, in Sicily. At first, she heard a doleful trumpet, which uttered, in a tone of thunder, audible over the entire earth, the following words: "Ultio, pœna, dolor." She then saw several sacrilegious ecclesiastics, singing psalms with discordant voices, and in a confused and irregular manner. She next saw one of them rise up to go to the altar and say mass. While he was putting on the sacred vestments, the church was covered with darkness and mourning. He approaches the altar, and, in saying the "Introibo ad altare Dei," the trumpet sounds

again, and repeats: "ultio, pœna, dolor." In an instant, the altar appeared to be surrounded by flames of fire, which denoted the just fury of the Lord against the unworthy celebrant; and at the same time a great multitude of angels were seen, with swords in their hands, as if to execute vengeance on him for the sacrilegious mass, which he was going to offer. When the monster came near the consecration, a crowd of vipers sprung from the midst of the flames to drive him away from the altar: these vipers represented his fears and stings of conscience. But they were all useless; the impious wretch preferred his own reputation to all these stings of remorse. Finally, he pronounced the words of consecration; and instantly the servant of God felt an universal earthquake, which caused heaven, earth, and hell to tremble. She saw angels around the altar, bathed in tears; but, the divine mother wept still more bitterly at the death of her innocent son, and at the loss of a sinful child. After a vision, so tremendous and dismal, the servant of God was so overpowered with fear and sorrow, that she could do nothing but weep. The author of her life remarks, that it was in the same year the earthquake happened, which produced such havoc in the city of Naples, and in the surrounding country. Hence, we may infer, that this earthquake was a punishment for the sacrilegious mass at which sister Mary was present.

41. But, exclaims St. Augustine, what more horrid impiety can be conceived, than that the tongue which calls down the Son of God from heaven, should be, at the very same moment, employed in outraging his majesty? or, that the hands which are bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ, should be, at the same time, polluted with the blood of sin: "Lingua quæ vocat de cœlo filium Dei, contra Dominum loquitur! et manus quæ intinguntur sanguine Christi polluuntur sanguine peccati?"—Serm. 39, Tract. ad Erem. To the sacrilegious priest, St. Bernard says: O unworthy wretch! if you wish to commit the enormous crime of celebrating mass in the state of sin, at least procure another tongue, and do not employ that

which is washed in the blood of Jesus Christ: procure hands different from those which you stretch out to touch his sacred flesh: "Quando ergo peccare volueris, quære aliam linguam quam eam quæ rubescit sanguine Christi; alias manus præter eas quæ Christum suscipiunt."—Serm. in die. pass. Oh! let the priest who wishes to live in enmity with God, at least, abstain from sacrilegiously offering sacrifice on his altar! But, no! says St. Bonaventure, he will, for the sake of the miserable *alms*, which he receives, continue to commit a sin of such horrible enormity: "Accedunt non vocati a Deo, sed impulsi ab avaritia."—De præp. ad Miss. c. 8. Perhaps, he expects that the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, which he offers in sacrifice, will deliver him from his iniquities? "Shall the holy flesh," says the prophet Jeremias, "take away from thee thy crimes, in which thou hast boasted?"—xi. 15. No: the contact of that sacred body, as long as you remain in the state of sin, shall render you more guilty and more deserving of chastisement. He, says St. Peter Chrysologus, who commits a crime in the presence of his judge, can advance no grounds of defence: "Excusatione caret qui facinus, ipso judice teste, committit."—Serm. 26.

42. What chastisement does not the priest deserve, who, instead of carrying with him to the altar, flames of divine charity, brings the fetid fire of unchaste love? Speaking of the punishment inflicted on the sons of Aaron, for having offered strange fire (Levit, c. 10.) St. Peter Damian says: "Cavendum est ne alienum ignem, hoc est libidinis flammam, inter salutares hostias deferamus."—Op. 26, c. 1. Whosoever, adds the saint, shall dare to carry the flame of lust to the altar, shall certainly be consumed by the fire of God's vengeance: "Quisquis carnali concupiscentiæ flammâ æstuat, et assistere altaribus non formidat ille procul dubio divinæ ultionis consumitur."—Ibid. c. 3. May the Lord, then, preserve us from ever adoring on the altar, the idol of impurity, and from placing the Son of the Virgin in the Temple of Venus, that is, in an unchaste heart. "Absit," says the holy doctor, in another place, "ut aliquis huic idolo subster-

natur, et filium Virginis in Veneris templo suscipiat."—Serm. 61, in vig. nat. Dom. If the man who came to the feast without the nuptial garment, was cast into darkness, how much greater vengeance shall fall on him who approaches the divine table, not only not clothed with a decent garment, but exhaling the stench of his impurities. "Quid," says the same St. Peter Damian, "illi sperandum qui cœlestibus tricliniis intromissus, non modo non est spiritualis indumenti decore conspicuus, sed ultro etiam fœtet sordentis luxuriæ squallore perfusus."—Op. 18, diss. 1, c. 4. Woe, exclaimed St. Bernard, to him who separates himself from God; but still greater wo to the priest, who approaches the altar with a guilty conscience: Væ ei, qui se alienum fecerit ab eo: et multum væ ei qui immundus accesserit."—Lib. de ord. vit. Speaking, one day, to St. Bridget, of a priest who had sacrilegiously celebrated mass, the Lord said: that he entered into the soul of that priest as a spouse for his sanctification, and that he was obliged to depart from it as a judge, to inflict the punishment merited by the sacrilegious reception of his body: "Ingredior sacerdotem istum ut sponsus, egredior ut judex judicaturus contemptus a sumente."—Rev. Lib. 4, cap. 92.

43. If the sacrilegious priest will not abstain from celebrating the divine mysteries in the state of sin, through horror of the insult, or, rather of so many insults offered to God, by sacrilegious masses, he ought, at least, to tremble at the awful chastisement prepared for him. St. Thomas of Villanova teaches, that no punishment is sufficient to avenge a crime so enormous as a sacrilegious mass. "Woe," he says, "to the sacrilegious hands! woe to the unclean breast of the impious priest! Every punishment is inadequate to the sin by which Christ is despised in this sacrifice."—Conc. 3, de Sanc. alt. Our Lord, once said to St. Bridget, that such priests are cursed by all creatures in heaven and on earth: "Maledicti sunt in cœlo et in terra, et ab omnibus creaturis quia ipsæ obediunt Deo, et ipsi spreverunt."—Apud Mansi. A priest, as we have said in another place, is a vessel

consecrated to God; and as Balthassar was chastised for having profaned the vessels of the Temple, so shall the priest be punished who unworthily offers sacrifice. "Videmus," says St. Peter Damian, "sacerdotes abutentes vasis Deo consecratis, sed prope est manus illa, et scriptura terribilis; Mane Thekel, Phares, numeratum appensum, divisum."—De cœl. sacr., c. 3. *Numeratum:* a single sacrilege is sufficient to put an end to the number of divine graces. *Appensum:* such a crime is enough to make the balance of divine justice descend to the eternal perdition of the sacrilegious priest. *Divisum:* enraged at such an enormity, the Lord shall banish and separate you from himself for eternity. Thus, then, shall be verified the words of David: "Let their table become as a snare before them."—Ps. lxviii. 23. The altar shall become for the sacrilegious priest the place of his punishment, where, remaining obstinate in sin, he shall be bound in the chains of hell, and shall be made the perpetual slave of satin. For, according to St. Laurence Justinian, they who communicate in mortal sin, adhere with greater pertinacity to sin: "Sumentes indigni præ cæteris, delicta graviora committunt et pertinacius in malo sunt."—Serm. de Euch. n. 9. This is conformable to the doctrine of the apostle, that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself."—1 Cor., xi. 29. Hence St. Peter Damian exclaims: O priest of God! who offer to the eternal Father his own Son in sacrifice, do not beforehand immolate yourself as a victim to the devil. "O sacerdos, qui debes offerre, noli prius temetipsum maligno spiritui victimam immolare."—De cœl. sacr., c. 3.

SIXTH CHAPTER.

On the Sin of Scandal.

1. The devil first procured the invention of deities addicted to vice, he then sought to induce the Gen-

tiles to worship them, that thus men might consider it lawful to sin as often as they pleased, and that they might even lose all horror for the vices with which they saw their gods clothed. This, Seneca who was a Gentile, confessed: "Ut pudor peccandi ab hominibus demeretur; quid enim est aliud auctores vitiorum facere eos (id est divos) quam dare exemplo divinitatis, excusatam licentiam?"—De vita beata, c. 26. Hence, as we read in the works of the same Seneca, the unhappy Gentiles would say: "Quod divos decuit cur mihi turpe putem?" But what the devil obtained from the Gentiles by means of these pretended deities, whom he proposed as models for imitation, he now obtains from Christians by means of the scandalous priest, who by his bad example persuades poor seculars into a belief that what they see in their pastor is lawful, or at least not a great evil in worldlings. "Persuadent sibi," says St. Gregory, "id licere quod a suis pastoribus fieri conspiciunt, et ardentius perpetrant."—Past., p. 1, c. 2. God has placed priests in the world that they may be a model to others, as our Saviour himself was sent by his Father to be an example to the world: "Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos."—Joan., xx. 21. Hence St. Jerome wrote to a bishop to guard against actions by the imitation of which, others might be drawn as it were, by force into sin: "Cave ne committas quod qui volunt imitari cogantur delinquere."—Ep. ad Elidor.

2. The sin of scandal consists not only in directly advising others to do evil, but also in inducing them indirectly by acts, to the commission of sin. Scandal is thus defined by St. Thomas and other theologians: "Dictum vel factum minus rectum, præbens alteri ruinam." To understand the grievousness of the sin of scandal, it is enough to know, that, according to St. Paul, he who offends against a brother by leading him into sin, offends against Jesus Christ: "When you sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ."—1 Cor. viii. 12. St. Bernard assigns the reason, saying that the author of scandal robs Jesus Christ of the souls redeemed by

his blood. The saint goes so far as to say that Jesus Christ suffers more from those who scandalize others, than he did from his crucifiers: "Si Dominus proprium sanguinem dedit in pretium redemptionis animarum, non tibi videtur graviorem sustinere persecutionem ab illo qui scandali occasione avertit ab eo animas quas redemit, quam ab illo qui sanguinem suum fudit?"—Serm. in conver. S. Pauli.

3. But if in all, even in seculars, the sin of scandal is so detestable, how much greater must be its malice in a priest, whom God has placed on earth to save souls and to conduct them to heaven? The priest is called the salt of the earth, and the light of the world: "Vos estis sal terræ.....vos estis lux mundi."—Mat., v. 13, 14. The office of salt is to preserve soundness, and prevent putrefaction, and the office of the priest is to preserve souls in the grace of God. What, says St. Augustine, shall become of the people if the priest does not perform the office of salt: "Itaque, si sal infatuatum fuerit, in quo salietur? Qui erunt homines per quos a vobis error auferatur, cum vos elegerit Deus, per quos errorem auferat cæterorum?"—Lib. 1, de serm. Dom. c. 6. Then, the saint proceeds to say, this salt shall be fit only to be cast away by the Church, and to be trodden by all: "Ergo ad nihilum valet ultra nisi ut mittatur foras, et calcetur ab hominibus."—Ibid. But what, if instead of being a preservative, this salt be employed in producing and promoting corruption? If instead of bringing souls to God, a priest is occupied in leading them to perdition, what punishment shall he deserve?

4. The priest is also the light of the world. Hence, says St. Chrysostom, he should shine with the splendour of his sanctity so as to enlighten all others to imitate his virtues: "Splendore vitæ totum illuminatis orbem splendere debet animus sacerdotis." But should this light be changed into darkness, what must become of the world? Shall it not be brought to ruin? "Causæ sunt ruinæ populi sacerdotes mali." says St. Gregory.—Lib. 4, epist. 64. The saint has written the same to the bishops of France, whom he

exhorted to chastise the priest who is guilty of scandal: "Ne paucorum facinus multorum possit esse perditio: nam ruina populi sacerdotes mali."—Epist. 48. This is conformable to the words of the Prophet Osee: "Et erit sicut populus; sic sacerdos."—iv. 9. By the mouth of Jeremias the Lord has said, "And I will fill the soul of the priest with fatness; and my people shall be filled with good things." xxxi. 14. Hence St. Charles Borromeo says that if the priests be fat and rich in virtue, the people, too, shall be rich; but if the priests be poor, the people shall be in still greater poverty: "Si sint pingues sacerdotes, erunt populi pingues; si sint inanes, magna imminebit populis paupertas."

5. Thomas of Cantimplano writes that in Paris a devil told an ecclesiastic to preach to the clergy of that city, and to say that the princes of hell saluted and thanked some of them for having caused the damnation of an immense multitude of souls: "Principes tenebrarum principes ecclesiæ salutant et læti gratias referunt, quia per eorum negligentiam ad nos devolvitur fere totus mundus."—Lib. 1, c. 29, n. 9. Of this the Lord complained by the Prophet Jeremias: "My people hath been a lost flock, their shepherds have caused them to go astray."—l. 6. There is no alternative, says St. Gregory; when the priest walks into the precipice, the people, too, are dashed to ruin: "Cum pastor per abrupta graditur, consequens est ut ad præcipitium grex feratur."—Past., p. 1, lib. 2. The bad example of the priest necessarily produces immorality among his people: "Misera sacerdotum conversatio," says St. Bernard, plebis subversio est."—S. Bern. in conv. S. Paul. Should a secular mistake the way, he alone is lost; but when a priest errs, he shall cause the perdition of many, particularly of those who are under his care. "Si quis de populo deviat," says the same St. Bernard, "solus perit; verum principis error multos involvit et tantis obest quantis præst."—Epist. 127. The Lord ordained in Leviticus (iii. 14.) that for the sin of a single priest a calf should be offered, as well as for the sins of the entire people. From this

Innocent III concludes that the sin of a priest is as grievous as the sins of the whole people. The reason is, that by his sin the priest leads the entire people into sin. "Unde," says the pontiff, "conjicitur quia peccatum sacerdotis totius multitudinis peccato coæquatur; quia sacerdos in suo peccato totam facit delinquere multitudinem." And, long before, the Lord himself said the same: "Si sacerdos qui unctus est peccaverit, delinquere faciet populum."—Lev. iv. 3. Hence, St. Augustine, addressing priests, says, "Nolite cœlum claudere; clauditis dum male vivere ostenditis." Our Lord said one day to St. Bridget, that when sinners see the bad example of the priest, they are encouraged to commit sin, and even begin to glory in the vices of which they were before ashamed: "Viso examplo pravo sacerdotum: peccator fiduciam peccandi sumit, et incipit de peccato quod prius reputabat erubiscibile, gloriari."—Rev., lib. 4, c. 32. Hence our Lord added that worse maledictions shall fall on the priest than on others; because by his sinful life he brings himself and others to perdition. "Ideo ipsis erit major maledictio præ aliis, quia se vita sua perdunt et alios."—Ibid.

6. The author of the *Imperfect Work* says that all who see a tree covered with pale and withered leaves, immediately infer that its roots have been injured; and when we see a people immoral, we may justly conclude, without danger of rash judgment, that the priest is a man without virtue: "Vidit arborem pallentibus foliis marcidam, et intellexit agricola quia læsuram in radicibus habet, ita cum videris populum irreligiosum, sine dubio cognoscis quia sacerdotium ejus non est sanum."—Hom. 38, in Mat. Yes, says St. Chrysostom, the life of the priest is the root from which the people, who are the branches, receive nutriment. St. Ambrose also says that priests are the head from which virtue flows to the members, that is, to seculars. "The whole head is sick," says the Prophet Isaias, "……from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head there is no soundness therein."—Isa., i. 5, 6. St. Isidore explains this passage in the following words: "Caput……languidum est doctor agens pec-

catum, cujus malum ad corpus pervenit."—Lib.3, cap. 38. St. Leo weeps over this evil, saying, how can health be found in the body if the head be not sound? "Totius familiæ ordo nutabit, dum quod requiritur in corpore non invenitur in capite." Who, says St. Bernard, shall seek in a sink the limpid water of the spring? Shall I, adds the saint, seek counsel from the man who knows not how to give counsel to himself? "Quis in cœno fontem requirat? an idoneum putabo qui mihi det consilium qui non det sibi?"—Ad Cœcil., c. 20. Speaking of the bad example of princes, Plutarch says, that it poisons not a single cup but the public fountain; and thus, because all draw from the fountain, all are poisoned: "Hi non in unum calicem venenum mittunt sed in fontem, quo videntur omnes uti." This may be said with greater truth of the bad example of priests; hence Eugene III has said that bad superiors are the principal causes of the sins of inferiors. "Inferiorem culpæ ad nullos magis referendæ sunt quam ad desides rectores."—Apud S. Bern., lib. 5, de consid., c. 434.

7. Priests are called by St. Gregory *Patres Christianorum.* Thus, also, are they called by St. Chrysostom, who says that a priest as the representative of God, is bound to take care of all men, because he is the Father of the whole world: "Quasi totius orbis pater sacerdos est: dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat, sicut et Deus cujus fungitur vice."—Hom. 6, in ep. 2. ad Tim. 1. As a parent, then, sins doubly when he gives bad example to his children, so a priest is also guilty of a double sin when he gives bad example to seculars. "Quid faciet laicus," says Peter Blessensis, "nisi quod patrem suum spiritualem viderit facientem."—Serm. 57, ad sacerd. St. Jerome made the same remark in a letter to a certain bishop: "Quidquid feceris, id sibi omnes faciendum putant." Ad Eliod., ep. 3. When they sin at the sight of the bad example of a priest, seculars, as Cesarius has observed, say "Quid, non talia clerici et majoris ordinis faciunt?"—Serm. 15. St. Augustine puts the following words into the mouth of a secular: "Quid mihi

loqueris? Ipsi clerici non illud faciunt? Et me cogis ut non faciam?"—De verb. Dom., ser. 49. St. Gregory says, that when, instead of edifying the people, a priest gives scandal, he renders sin, in a certain manner, honourable rather than an object of horror: "Pro reverentia ordinis peccatum honoratur."

8. Such a priest, then, is at the same time a parent and a parricide; for, as St. Gregory says, he is the cause of the death of his spiritual children: "Quibus quotidie percussionibus intereat populus videtis; cujus hoc, nisi sacerdotum peccato agitur? Nos populo auctores mortis existimus, cui esse debuimus duces ad vitam."—Hom. 17, in ev. Some one who has lost the divine light may say, I must give an account of my own sins, but what have I to do with the sins of others? He may say what he pleases, but I exhort him to listen to the words of St. Jerome: "Si dixeris: sufficit mihi conscientia mea, non curo quæ loquantur homines: audi apostolum scribentem: Providentes bona non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus."—2 Cor., viii. 4. St. Bernard says that the scandalous priest kills others at the same time that he murders his own soul: "Non parcunt suis qui non parcunt sibi, perimentes pariter et pereuntes."—Serm. 77, in Cant. And in another place the saint writes that there is no plague more noxious to the people than ignorance in a priest united with irregularity of life: "Post indoctos prælatos malosque, in sancta ecclesia nulla pestis ad nocendum infirmis valentior invenitur."—De ordine vitæ, c. 1. In another place the same saint says that in their sermons many priests are orthodox, but in their conduct they are heretics. Because, by their bad example, they inflict a deeper wound on religion than heretics do by teaching false doctrines, because acts have more force than words. "Multi sunt catholici prædicando, qui sunt hæretici operando. Quod hæretici faciebant per prava dogmata, hoc faciunt plures hodie per mala exempla; et tanto graviores sunt hæreticis, quanto prævalent opera verbis."—Ad pastor in synod.

9. Seneca says that the way of instruction is a long and tedious way of learning vice or virtue; but the way of example is short and efficacious: "Longum iter per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla." Hence speaking particularly of the chastity of priests, St. Augustine has written: "Omnibus castitas pernecessaria est, sed maxime ministris Christi, quorum vita aliorum debet esse salutis prædicatio."—Serm. 249, de temp. How can the slave of lust preach chastity? "Qui prædicator es castitatis," says St. Peter Damian, "non te pudet servum esse libidinis."—Op. 17, c. 3. St. Jerome says that the very state and dress of an ecclesiastic, call for and demand chastity: "Clamat vestis clericalis, clamat status professi animi sanctitatem."—Ep. 58. What a source of scandal, then, to the Church, to see a man with the name and rank of a saint, give examples of vice? "Nemo," says St. Gregory, "amplius in ecclesia nocet quam qui perverse agens, nomen vel ordinem sanctitatis habet." And must it not, adds St. Isidore, be a still more disastrous evil to see a priest avail himself of his dignity as the arms with which he commits sin? "Sacerdotis dignitate velut armis ad vitium abuti."—Lib. 2, epis. 21. According to the words of Ezechiel, such a priest renders the exalted dignity of his state an object of abomination: "Abominabilem fecisti decorem tuum."—Ezech., xvi. 25. St. Bernard says that the priest who does not give good example, is an object of scorn to the entire people: "Aut honestiores, aut fabula omnibus sunt." De cons., lib. 4, c. 6. It is a deordination to see a priest live like worldlings; but what a scandal to see his conduct worse than that of seculars? "Quomodo," says the author of the *Imperfect Work*, "non sit confusio esse sacerdotes inferiores laicis, quos etiam esse æquales magna confusio est?"—Hom. 3. And what example, says St. Ambrose, can the people take from you, if in you, who are esteemed holy, they witness actions of which they themselves are ashamed? "Si quæ in se erubescit, in te, quam reverendum arbitratur, offendat?"

10. "Hear ye this, O priests," says the Prophet

Osee, "..... for there is a judgment against you, because you have been a snare to them whom you should have watched over, and a net spread upon Thabor."—v. 1. The sportsman employs decoys, that is, birds that are bound so that they cannot fly away, and the devil employs the authors of scandal in order to catch souls in his net. "Cum primum capta fuerit anima, ad alias decipiendas fit quasi laqueus." Of these authors of scandal, God complains by the prophet Jeremias, saying, "For among my people are found wicked men that lie in wait as fowlers, setting snares and traps to catch."—v. 26. But, says Cesarius of Arles, the devil seeks, in a special manner, to employ for his decoys scandalous priests; hence this author calls them, "columbas quas aucupes, (that is, the devils,) excitare solent ad alias capiendas."

11. A certain author attests that in ancient times, when a simple ecclesiastic passed by the way, all rose up and besought him to recommend them to God. Is this done at the present day? Alas! Jeremiah weeps and says: "Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus, dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum."—Thren., iv. 1. The gold, according to the exposition of Cardinal Hugo, signifies ecclesiastics, in some of whom it has lost its beautiful colour: it has ceased to be ruddy with holy charity; it has grown dim, and no longer shines with the splendour of brilliant examples. The stones of the sanctuary, that is, says St. Jerome, many of the priests, are scattered through the streets, and serve only to precipitate poor seculars into vice. This passage is thus explained also by St. Gregory: "Aurum quippe," writes the holy doctor, "obscuratum quia sacerdotum vita per actiones ostenditur reproba, color optimus est mutatus, quia sanctitatis habitus, per abjecta opera ad ignominiam despectionis venit. Dispersi sunt, lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum; ecce jam pene nulla est sæculi actio, quam non sacerdotes administrent."

12. "Filii matris meæ pugnaverunt contra me."—Cant. 1. 5. Origen applies this passage to the disorderly priest who, he says, arms himself by his

scandals against his own mother the Church. St. Jerome says that the Church is laid waste by the scandalous lives of some of her priests: "Propter vitia sacerdotum Dei sanctuarium destitutum est."—Epist. 48. Hence on the words of Ezechias, (ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.—Isa., xxxviii. 17,) St. Bernard speaking in the name of the Church, said: "Pax a paganis, pax ab hæreticis, et non pax a filiis."—Serm. 3, in Cant. At present, says the holy Church, I am not persecuted by the pagans, for the tyrants have ceased, nor by the heretics, because there are no new heresies, but I am persecuted by the ecclesiastic who by his scandals robs me of so many souls. "Nullum," says St. Gregory, "ab aliis, puto, majus præjudicium tolerat Deus quam quod eos quos ad aliorum correptionem posuit, dare exempla pravitatis cernit."—Hom. 17. By his bad example, the scandalous priest brings disgrace even on his own ministry, that is, on his sermons, Masses, and all his functions. Against this, the apostle has warned priests: "Nemini dantes ullam offensionem, ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum, sed in omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros."—2 Cor., vi. 3, 4. Salvian says that through certain priests, the law of Jesus Christ is dishonoured: "In nobis lex Christiana maledicitur."—Lib. 4, ad Ec. cat. St. Bernard writes that many, seeing the bad example of the scandalous ecclesiastic, begin even to waver in faith, and thus abandon themselves to vice, despising the sacraments, hell, and heaven: "Plurimi considerantes clerici sceleratam vitam, et ex hoc vacillantes imo multoties deficientes in fide, vitia non evitant, sacramenta despiciunt, non horrent inferos, cœlestia minime concupiscunt."—De duod. pœn. imped., serm. 19.

13. St. Chrysostom writes that the infidels seeing the vices of certain priests, would say that the God of the Christians either was not the true God, or that he was not a God of sanctity. For, said they, were he holy, how could he tolerate the sins of his priests? "Qualis est eorum Deus qui talia agunt? numquid sustineret eos, (that is, priests,) talia facientes, nisi consentiret operibus eorum?" In the instruction on

the Mass, we shall relate more at length the fact of a heretic who had resolved to abjure his errors, but being afterwards present at a Mass celebrated in a scandalous manner, he determined to remain in his heresy, and said that even the pope did not believe in the Mass; for if he did he would condemn such priests to be burnt alive. St. Jerome said that among those who had infected the Church and perverted the people, he found in history the names only of priests: "Veteres scrutans historias invenire non possum scidisse ecclesiam et populos seduxisse, præter eos qui sacerdotes a Deo positi sunt."—In can. Transferunt, 33. 24. q. 3. And Peter Blessensis says: "Propter negligentiam sacerdotum hæreses pullularunt."—Serm. 50, ad sacerd. In another place, he says: "Propter peccata sacerdotum data est in conculcationem et in opprobrium sancta Dei ecclesia."—Serm. 60, in c. 5, Oseæ. St. Bernard was of opinion that greater injury is done to the Church by scandalous priests than even by the heretics; because we may guard against heretics, but how can we guard against the priest of whose ministry we must necessarily avail ourselves? "Serpit hodie putida tabes per omne corpus ecclesiæ, et quo latius, eo desperatius, quo inimicus est interius. Nam si insurgeret apertus hæreticus; mitteretur foras; si violentus inimicus, absconderet se ab eo. Nunc vero quem ejiciet aut quo abscondet se? omnes necessarii et omnes adversarii."—Serm. 33, in Cant.

14. Oh! how great the punishment which is reserved for the scandalous priest? If against every secular who gives scandal, vengeance has been threatened, "væ homini illi per quem scandalum venit."—Matth., xviii. 7. How much more tremendous the scourge which shall fall on the scandalous priest whom God has chosen from among all men for his own minister? "Elegit eum ex omni carne."—Eccl., xlv. 4. Jesus Christ has chosen him to bring forth fruit by saving souls. "Elegi vos et posui vos ut eatis et fructum afferatis."—Joan., xv. 16. And by bad example he robs Jesus Christ of souls redeemed with his blood. St. Gregory says that such a priest merits as many

deaths as he gives examples of vice: "Si perversa perpetrant, tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos exempla transmittunt."—Past., p. 3, admon. 5. Speaking especially of priests, our Lord said to St. Bridget: "Ipsis erit major maledictio quia se vita sua perdunt et alios." To them is intrusted the care of cultivating the vineyard of the Lord; but he casts out of his vineyard the scandalous priest, and places in his stead others who will bring forth good fruit: "Malos male perdet; et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis, qui reddant ei fructum temporibus suis."—Matth., xxi. 41. Alas! what shall become of the scandalous priest on the day of judgment? "I will," says the Lord, "meet them as the bear that is robbed of her whelps."—Oseæ, xiii. 8. With what rage does the bear rush on the sportsman who has killed or stolen her whelps? It is thus God has declared that he will meet on the day of judgment, the priest who has destroyed instead of saving souls. And if, says St. Augustine, we shall scarcely be able to give an account of ourselves, what shall become of the priest who shall have to render an account of the souls he will have sent to hell: "Si pro se unusquisque vix poterit in die judicii rationem reddere, quid de sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus omnium animæ requirendæ?"—Hom. 7, alias Serm. 15, in app. de. div. And St. John Chrysostom says, "Si sacerdotes fuerint in peccatis, totus populus convertitur ad peccandum. Ideo unusquisque pro suo peccato reddet rationem, sacerdotes autem pro omnium peccatis."—Hom. 38, in Mat. Oh! how many seculars, how many peasants, how many weak and tender females, shall cover the priest with shame and confusion in the valley of Josaphat? "Laicus," says St. John Chrysostom, "in die judicii stolam sacerdotalem accipiet; sacerdos autem peccator spoliabitur sacerdotii dignitate quam habuit et erit inter infideles et hypocritas."—Chrys. sive auct. op. imp., hom. 40.

15. Let us, then, dearly beloved priests, guard against bringing to hell by our bad example the souls for whose salvation God has placed us in the world. And for this purpose we must avoid not only actions

which are in themselves unlawful, but also those which have the appearance of evil: "Ab omni specie mali abstinete vos."—1 Thess., v. 22. The Council of Agatha ordains "ut ancillæ a mansione in qua clericus manet removeantur." To keep young servant maids, though they were not an occasion of evil, (quod est impossibile,) has at least the appearance of evil, and may give scandal to others. Hence the apostle has written that we should sometimes abstain from what is lawful, lest it "become a stumbling block to the weak."—1 Cor., viii. 9. It is also necessary to abstain with great care from giving expression to certain worldly maxims; such as, we must not allow others to take precedence; we must enjoy the present life; happy the man who abounds in riches; God is full of mercy and has pity on us, even on sinners who persist in sin. But how scandalous would it be to praise persons for sinful conduct? For example, for resenting an injury, or for maintaining a dangerous friendship. "Longe perjus est," says St. John Chrysostom, "collaudare delinquentes quam delinquere."—Hom. 2, de Saule et Davide. He who has hitherto had the misfortune of giving scandal, or of being the occasion of scandal, is bound under pain of grievous sin to repair it by external good example.

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

On the Zeal of a Priest.

In giving the spiritual exercises to the clergy, the sermon on zeal is the most necessary, and may be the most useful of all; for if one of the priests who assist at the exercises, resolves (as we ought to hope through the divine grace,) to employ himself in procuring the salvation of souls, God will gain not one but a hundred and a thousand souls, that shall be saved through the labours of that priest.

We shall speak first of the obligation of priests to labour for the salvation of souls; secondly, of the

pleasure which a priest who seeks the salvation of souls, gives to God; thirdly, of the eternal glory and the great reward which a priest who labours for the salvation of souls, may expect from God.

SECTION I.

On the obligation of every Priest to labour for the salvation of souls.

1. "Multi sacerdotes, et pauci sacerdotes; multi nomine, pauci opere," (In Mat.) says the author of the *Imperfect Work.* The world is filled with priests, but few of them labour to be priests; that is, to fulfil the duty and obligations of a priest, or to save souls. The dignity of priests is great, because they are the coadjutors of God. "Dei.....sumus adjutores."—1 Cor., iii. 9. And what greater dignity, says the apostle, than that of co-operating with Jesus Christ in saving the souls which he has redeemed? Hence the Areopagite calls the dignity of the priest a divine dignity, and even the most divine of all divine things: "Divinissimum est co-operatorem fieri in conversione animarum."—De Eccl. hier., cap. 3. For, as St. Augustine says, it requires more power to sanctify a sinner than to create heaven and earth: "Majus opus est ex impio justum facere quam creare cœlum et terram."—Tr. 52, in Jo. St. Jerome used to call priests the saviours of the world: "Sacerdotes Dominus mundi voluit esse salvatores."—In Abdiam., 27. 22. St. Prosper calls them the administrators of the royal house of God: "Dispensatores regiæ domus."—Lib. 2, de vita cont., c. 2. And, long before, Jeremias called them the fishers and sportsmen of the Lord: "Behold, I will send many fishers," saith the Lord, "and after this I will send many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."—Jer., xvi. 16. St. Ambrose explains this passage of priests who gain to God the most abandoned sinners, and deliver them from all their vices.—In Ps. 118. The *mountain* signifies pride; the *hill*, pusillanimity; and the *holes*

of the rocks, bad habits, which bring with them darkness of understanding and coldness of heart. Peter de Blois says that in the work of creation, God had no one to assist him, but in the mystery of redemption he wished to have coadjutors."—Serm. 47. Who on this earth is superior to the priest? "Regi quæ hic sunt," says St. Chrysostom, "commissa sunt; mihi cœlestia, mihi sacerdoti."—Lib. 1, de Sacerd., cap. 4. And innocent says: "Licet beatæ Virgo Maria dignior fuerit apostolis, non tamen illi sed istis Dominus claves regni cœlorum commisit."—3 Part., c. Rem.

2. St. Peter Damian calls the priest the leader of the people of God: "Sacerdos dux exercitus Domini."—De dign. sacerd. St. Bernard styles him the guardian of the Church, which is the spouse of Jesus Christ: "Sponsæ custodem," (Serm. ad cler.) and St. Clement, an earthly god: "Post Deum terrenus Deus."—Const. ap. lib. 2, c. 26. For by the ministry of priests, the saints are formed on earth. St. Flavian says that all the hope and salvation of men is placed in the hands of priests: "Nihil honorabilius sacerdotibus; omnis enim spes atque salus in iis est."—Ep. 7, ad Leon. pap. And St. John Chrysostom writes, "Parentes nos in præsentem, sacerdotes in vitam æternam generant."—De Sacerd., c. 5. Without priests, says St. Ignatius Martyr, there should be no saints on this earth: "Absque sacerdotibus nulla sanctorum congregatio."—Ep. ad Trul. And, long before, holy Judith said that on priests depends the salvation of the people: "Vos estis presbyteri in populo Dei, et ex vobis pendet anima illorum."—viii. 21. The priest is the author of holiness of life in seculars, and on him depends their salvation. Hence St. Clement has said: "Honorate sacerdotes, ut bene vivendi auctores."—In constit. apost.

3. Great, then, beyond measure, is the dignity and office of priests, but great also is their obligation to labour for the salvation of souls. "Omnis namque pontifex," says the apostle, "ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis." He after-

wards proceeds to say: "Qui condolere possit iis qui ignorant et errant."—Heb., v. 2. The priest, then, is appointed by God as well to honour him by sacrifices, as also to save souls by instructing and converting sinners: "Regale sacerdotium.....populus acquisitionis."—1 Pet., ii. 9. The order of ecclesiastics differs altogether from that of seculars. The latter attend to the things of the world and to themselves, but the former are a purchased people; a people whose business is to gain not the goods of this earth, but the souls of men. "Officium quæstus," says St. Ambrose, "non pecuniarum, sed animarum."—In c. 1, Is. St. Antonine says that the very name of the priest explains the nature of his office: "Sacerdos, id est, sacra docens." And St. Thomas says, "Sacerdos sacrum dans."—3. p., q. 22, a. Honorius Augustodunensis says: "Presbyter dicitur præbens iter populo de exilio ad patriam."—In Josue, iii. 6. St. Ambrose calls priests the "leaders of the flock of Christ."—De div. sacerd., cap. 2. Hence the saint says in another place: "Nomen respondeat actioni; ne sit nomen inane, crimen immane." If, then, the meaning of the words *sacerdos* and *presbyter*, is to assist souls in order to save and conduct them to heaven, let the name and conduct, says St. Ambrose, correspond; that the name may not be empty, and that the honour of the office may not become a source of guilt: "Detrimentum pecoris ignominia pastoris," adds the same holy doctor.

4. If, then, says St. Jerome, you wish to perform the office of a priest, let the salvation of others be the gain of your soul: "Si officium vis exercere presbyteri, aliorum salutem fac lucrum animæ tuæ."—Epist. 13. And St. Anselm holds that the proper office of a priest is to preserve souls from the corruption of the world, and to lead them to God: "Sacerdotis proprium est animas e mundo rapere, et dare Deo." Hence the Lord has separated priests from the rest of mankind, that they may save themselves and others: "De medio populi segregantur, ut seipsos et populos tueantur"—Philip. abb. de dignit. cler., c. 2. Zeal, as St. Augustine says, springs from love.—In

Ps. 118, serm. 18. Hence, as charity obliges us to love God and our neighbour, so zeal obliges us first to procure the glory and to prevent the dishonour of God, and afterwards to seek the welfare and to avert the injury of our neighbour.

5. It is useless to say, I am a simple priest; I have not the care of souls; it is enough for me to attend to myself. No: every priest is bound to attend in the way in which he can, to the salvation of souls, according to their necessity. And in a district in which souls are in grievous spiritual necessity for want of confessors, a simple priest is (as we have proved in our moral theology, lib. 6, n. 624, reg. 11,) bound to hear confessions; and if he has not the necessary qualifications, he is obliged to qualify himself for the office of confessor. This is the opinion which the learned Father Pavone of the Society of Jesus, has held in his works, and not without reason; for as God has sent Jesus Christ to save the world, so Jesus Christ has appointed priests to convert sinners: "Sicut misit me pater, et ego mitto vos."—Joan., xx. 21. Hence the Council of Trent ordains that they who wish to receive priesthood, should prove themselves fit for the administration of the sacraments: "Ad ministranda sacramenta idonei comprobentur." Sess. 24, c. 14. For this end, says the angelic doctor, God has constituted the order of priests, that they may sanctify others by the administration of the sacraments: "Deus posuit ordinem in ea, ut quidam aliis sacramenta traderent."—Supp. 934, a. 1. And priests are specially appointed to administer the sacrament of penance. For immediately after the words "sicut misit me pater," &c., St. John has added: "hæc cum dixisset, insufflavit et dixit eis; accipite Spiritum Sanctum; quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis." Since then it is the office of a priest to absolve from sins, one of his principal obligations is, to qualify himself for that office, at least when there is necessity, that he may not receive the reproach contained in the words of St. Paul to his companions in the priesthood, "Adjurantes autem exhortamur, ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis."—2 Cor., vi. 1.

6. Priests, as venerable Bede writes, are destined by God to be the salt of the earth, that they may preserve souls from the corruption of sins: "Ut sales, condiant animos ad incorruptionis sanitatem."—In Matth. But if salt do not perform the office of salt, it is fit only to be cast out of the house of the Lord, and to be trodden by all: "Si sal evanuerit.....ad nihilum valet ultra, nisi ut mittatur foras, et conculcetur ab hominibus."—Matth. v. 13. Every priest, says St. Chrysostom, is, as it were, the father of the whole world, and therefore should have care of all the souls to whose salvation he can co-operate by his labours: "Quasi pater totius orbis sacerdos est; dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat, sicut et Deus, cujus fungitur vice."...Hom. 6, in ep. 1, cap. 2, ad Tim. Besides, priests are appointed by God as physicians to cure every soul that is infirm; thus Origen has called them "Medicos animarum," and St. Jerome, "Medicos spirituales." Hence St. Bonaventure says, "Si medicus fuerit ægrotus quis curabit?"—De sex alis, &c., cap. 5. Priests are also called the walls of the Church: "Habet ecclesia muros suos," says St. Ambrose, "id est viros apostolicos." And the author of the *Imperfect Work* says, "Muri illius sunt sacerdotes." They are also called the stones which support the Church of God: "Lapides sanctuarii," (Thr., iv. 1.) and by St. Eucherius they are called the pillars which sustain the tottering world: "Columnæ quæ nutantis orbis statum sustinent."—Hom. 3. Finally, they are called by St. Bernard the very house of God. Hence we may say with St. Chrysostom, that if a part of the house fall, the injury may be easily repaired: "Si pars domus fuerit corrupta, facilis est reparatio," (Hom. 47.) but if the walls fall, if the foundations and the pillars which sustain the edifice, give way, finally, if the whole house tumbles to the ground, how can the loss be ever repaired? Moreover, priests are called by the same St. Chrysostom, the husbandmen of the vineyard of the Lord: "Coloni populum, quasi vineam, colentes."—Hom. 40, in c. 2. Mat. But, O God, exclaims St. Bernard with tears, the husbandmen

sweat and labour the whole day in the cultivation of their own vineyards: "Sudant agricolæ, potant et fodiant vinitores." But what are the occupations of priests whom God has appointed to cultivate his vineyard? "Torpent otio," continues the saint, "madent deliciis," they are always corrupted with idleness and worldly pleasures.

7. "Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci." Mat., ix. 37. No: the bishops and parish priests are not sufficient for the spiritual wants of the people. If God had not destined other priests to assist souls, he should not have sufficiently provided for his Church. St. Thomas says that the twelve apostles destined by Jesus Christ for the conversion of the world, represented the bishops, and the seventy-two disciples represented all priests ordained for the salvation of souls, the fruit which the Redeemer demands of his priests: "Elegi vos ut.....fructum afferatis." Hence St. Augustine calls priests the administrators of the interests of God: "Eorum quæ Dei sunt negotiatores."—Serm. 36. To priests has been intrusted the duty of extirpating vice and pernicious maxims from the minds of the people, and of infusing into them the virtues of the Gospel and the maxims of eternity. On the day God raises a man to the priesthood, he says to him what he said to Jeremiah: "Lo, I have set thee thus over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up and pull down, and to waste and to destroy, and to build and to plant."—Jer., i. 10.

8. I do not know how a priest can be excused from sin, who sees the people of the district in grievous necessity, and is able to assist them by teaching the truths of faith, or by preaching the divine word, and even by hearing confessions, and through sloth neglects to give them spiritual aid? I know not, I say, how he can escape on the day of judgment the reproof and chastisement threatened against the slothful servant who hid the talent given to him, that he might *trade with it*.—Mat., xxv. The master gave him that talent that he might trade with it, but he hid it; and when the master demanded an account of the profit he had received from it, he answered:

"Abscondi talentum tuum in terra, ecce habes quod tuum est." But for hiding the talent the master reproved him, saying: What! I have given you a talent that you might trade with it; this is the talent, but where are the profits? He then took the talent from him, commanded it to be given to another, and ordered him to be cast into exterior darkness: "Tollite itaque ab eo talentum, et date ei qui habet decem talenta; et inutilem servum ejicite in tenebras exteriores." To be cast into exterior darkness means, according to the commentators, to be sent into the fire of hell, which gives no light, and to be excluded from heaven. And this passage is applied by St. Ambrose, Calmet, Cornelius a Lapide, and Tirinus, to those who can procure the salvation of souls, and neglect to do it, either through negligence or through a vain fear of committing sin. "Nocent hoc," says Cornelius, qui ingenio, doctrina aliisque dotibus sibi a Deo datis non utuntur ad suam aliorumque salutem, ob desidiam vel metum peccandi; ab his enim rationem reposcet Christus in die judicii." And St. Gregory says: "Audiant quod talentum qui erogare noluit cum sententia damnationis ejicitur." Peter de Blois writes, "Qui Dei donum in utilitatem alienam communicat, plenius meretur habere quod habet; qui autem talentum Domini abscondit, quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo." St. John Chrysostom says that he cannot conceive how a priest can be saved who does nothing for the salvation of his neighbour: "Neque id mihi persuasi salvum fieri quenquam posse qui pro proximi sui salute nihil laboris impenderit."—Lib. 6, de sacerd., c. 10. After having mentioned the parable of the talent, he says that for a priest, the neglect of having employed the talent given to him is criminal, and shall be the cause of his damnation: "Neque juvabit talentum sibi traditum non imminuisse, immo hoc ille nomine periit quod non auxisset et duplicasset."—Ibid. Addressing those who say, "sufficit mihi anima mea," St. Augustine says, "Eja non tibi venit in mentem servus ille qui abscondit talentum?

9. St. Prosper says that to save his own soul, it

will not be enough for a priest to lead a holy life, for he shall be damned with those who are lost through his fault: "Ille cui dispensatio verbi commissa est, etiamsi sancte vivit, et tamen perdite viventes arguere, aut erubescat aut metuat, cum omnibus qui eo tacente perierint perit; et quid ei proderit non puniri suo qui puniendus est alieno peccato?"—Sive Jul. Pomer. de vita cont., lib. 1, c. 50. In one of the apostolical canons we read the following words: "Presbyter qui cleri vel populo curam non gerit segregetur; et si in socordia perseverit, deponatur."—Can. 57. Why, says St. Leo, should you take the honour of the priesthood if you will not labour for the salvation of souls? Qua conscientia honore sibi sacerdotii præstitum vendicant qui pro animabus non laborant?" The Council of Cologne declared that if a person take the order of priesthood without the intention of performing the office of vicar of Jesus Christ, or of saving souls, a great and certain chastisement is reserved for him, as for a wolf and a robber, which he is called in the Gospel: "Sacerdotio initiandus non alio affectu accedere debet quam ad submittendos humeros publico muneri vice Christi in ecclesiæ. Qui alio affectu sacros ordines ambiunt, hos scriptura lupos et latrones appellat . . . . . Quod ingens ultio tandem certo subsequetur."

10. St. Isidore does not hesitate to charge with mortal sin, the priest who neglects to instruct the ignorant and to convert sinners: "Sacerdotes populorum iniquitate damnantur, si aut eos ignorantes non erudiant aut peccantes non arguant."—Lib. 3, sent. c. 46. And St. John Chrysostom says, "Sæpe non damnantur (sacerdotes) propriis peccatis, sed alienis quæ non coercuerunt."—Hom. 3, in Act. St. Thomas, speaking of a simple priest, says that the priest who fails either through negligence or ignorance, to assist souls, renders himself accountable to God for all the souls that are lost through his fault: "Si . . . . . sacerdos ex ignorantia vel negligentia non exponat populo viam salutis, reus erit apud Deum animarum illarum quæ sub ipso perierunt."—Opus. 65. St. Chrysostom says the same: "Si sacerdos

suam tantum disposuerit salvare animam, et alienas neglexerit cum impiis detrudetur in gehennam." A certain priest in Rome felt great fears at death for his eternal salvation, although he had led a life of retirement and piety. Being asked why he was so much afraid, he answered: "I am afraid, because I have not laboured for the salvation of souls." He had reason to tremble, since the Lord employs priests to save souls, and to rescue them from vice. Hence if a priest do not fulfil this duty, he must render to God an account of all the souls that are lost through his fault: "Si Dicente me ad impium: morte morieris, non annuntiaveris ei.....ut avertatur a via sua impia et vivat: ipse impius in iniquitate sun morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram." —Ezech., iii. 18. Thus, says St. Gregory, speaking of idle priests, they shall be accountable before God for the souls whom they could assist, and who are lost through their negligence: "Ex tantis procul dubio rei sunt, quantis venientes ad publicum prodesse potuerunt."—Pastor., p. 1, c. 5.

11. Jesus Christ has redeemed souls with the price of his blood: "Empti.....estis pretio magno."—1 Cor., vi. 20. But these souls the Redeemer has intrusted to the care of priests. Unhappy me, said St. Bernard, when he saw himself a priest, if I be negligent in taking care of this deposit; that is, of the souls whom the redeemer considered to be more precious than his own blood: "Si depositum, quod Christus proprio sanguine pretiosius judicavit contigerit negligentius custodire."—Serm. 3, in adv. Seculars have to render an account of their own sins, but priests must render an account of the sins of all. "Unusquisque," says the author of the *Imperfect Work*, "pro suo peccato reddet rationem; sacerdotes pro omnium peccatis."—Hom. 38, in Mat. And before him, the apostle said: "Ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri."—Heb., xiii. 17. Thus the sins of others are imputed to the priest who neglects to prevent them. "Quod alii peccant," says St. Chrysostom, "illi imputatur." —Hom. 3, in Act. Apost. Hence St. Augustine has

said: "Si pro se unusquisque vix poterit in die judicii rationem reddere, quid de sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus sunt omnium animæ requirendæ?"—Hom. 7, in Lucæ, xi. Speaking of those who become priests not to save souls, but to secure a more comfortable means of living, St. Bernard says, Oh! how much better would it have been for them to labour in the field, or to beg, than to have taken to the priesthood. On the day of judgment they shall hear complaints against them, from so many souls who have been damned through their sloth: "Bonum erat magis fodere aut etiam mendicare. Venient, venient mali clerici ante tribunal Christi; audietur populorum quærela, quorum vixere stipendiis, nec diluerunt peccata."—Declam., c. 16, n. 9.

SECTION II.

On the pleasure which a priest who labours for the salvation of souls, gives to God.

12. To understand how ardently God desires the salvation of souls, it is enough to consider what he has done in the work of the redemption of man. Jesus Christ clearly expressed this desire when he said, "Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quomodo coarctor usquedum perficiatur."—Lucæ, xii. 50. He said that he felt as if swooning away through the ardour with which he wished to see the work of redemption accomplished, that men might be saved. From this St. Chrysostom justly infers, that there is nothing more acceptable to God than the salvation of souls: "Nihil ita gratum Deo et ita curæ ut animarum salus."—Hom. 3, in Gen. And, before him, St. Justin said: "Nihil tam Deo gratum quam operam dare ut omnes reddantur meliores." Our Lord once said to Bernard Colnado, a priest who had laboured much for the conversion of sinners, "Labora pro salute peccatorum; hoc enim præ omnibus est mihi carissimum."—Ap. Sabatin Clero. sent., p. 1, c. 4, sec. 2, disc. 3. This is so dear to God, adds Clement of Alexandria, that the salvation of men appears to be

his sole concern: "Nihil aliud est domino curæ præterquam hoc solum opus, ut homo salvus fiat."—Admon. ad gust. Hence, addressing a priest, St. Laurence Justinian said: "Deum honorare conaris? Non aliter melius quam in hominis salutem poteris actitare."—De Contemp. &c., p. 2, n. 3.

13. St. Bernard says that in the eyes of God, a soul is more valuable than the whole world: "Totus iste mundus ad unius animæ pretium æstimari non potest."—In medit. Hence, according to St. Chrysostom, a person pleases God more by converting a single soul than by giving all his goods to the poor: "Etsi ingentes erogaveris pecunias, plus efficies si unam converteris animam. Tertullian asserts that to God the salvation of a single sheep that has strayed away, is as dear as the salvation of the entire flock: "Errat una pastoris ovicula; sed grex una carior non est. Hence the apostle said, "Dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me."—Gal., ii. 20. By these words he signified that Jesus Christ would have died as soon for a single soul as for the salvation of all men. "Neque enim," says St. Chrysostom in his comment on this passage, "recusaturus esset ad unum hominem tantam exhi bere dispensationem." This our Redeemer gave us to understand by the parable of the groat which had been lost. On this parable St. Thomas writes: "Omnes angelos convocat, non homini, sed sibi ad congratulandum (when the groat was found,) quasi homo Dei Deus esset, et tota salus divina ab ipsius inventione dependeret, et quasi sine ipso beatus esse non posset."—Opus. 65. It is related by several authors of St. Carpo, Bishop, that he had a vision in which he seemed to see a scandalous sinner who had induced an innocent person to commit sin, and that he felt himself impelled by zeal to throw him into a precipice on the brink of which he stood, but Jesus Christ appeared to support the sinner with his hand, and said to St. Carpo, "Percute me quia iterum pro peccatoribus mori paratus sum." As if he said: Hold, strike me rather than this sinner; for I have given my life for him, and am ready to give it again to save him from perdition.

14. The ecclesiastical spirit, says Habert, consists precisely in an ardent zeal for promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of our neighbour.—De Sacr. ord., p. 3, c. 5. Hence, according to Natalis Alexander, they who wish to attend only to themselves, and not to others, should not be admitted to the priesthood: "Quis ferat presbyterum ordinari ut sibi tantum vacet, non aliis?"—Theol. dogm. de ord., c. 3 reg. 22. The Lord commanded (Ex., 28.) that the, priests of the Old Law should wear vestments covered all over with certain circles, which resembled eyes, to show, as a certain author says, that the priest should be all eyes to attend to the sanctification of the people. St. Augustine says that zeal for the salvation of souls, and for the promotion of divine love in all men, springs from love. Then, adds the saint, he who has not zeal, shows that he does not love God; and he who does not love God is lost: "Zelus est effectus amoris; ergo qui non zelat, non amat; qui non amat, manet in morte."—In Ps. 118, serm. 18. He who watches over his own soul, pleases God; but he who watches over the souls of his neighbours, pleases him still more. "Tu quidem," says St. Bernard, "in tui custodia vigilans bene facis, sed qui juvat multus melius facit."—Serm., 12, in Cant.

15. God, says St. Chrysostom, has no better proof of the fidelity and affection of a soul, than in seeing her zealous for the welfare of her neighbour: "Nihil adeo declarat quis sit fidelis et amans Christi quam si fratris curam agat; hoc maximum amicitiæ argumentum est."—Hom. 31, ad Pop. Antioch. The Saviour three times asked St. Peter if he loved him: "Simon Joannis amas me?" When assured of Peter's love, Jesus Christ asked him to do nothing else in proof of his love than to take care of souls: "Dixit ei; pasce oves meos."—Joan., xxi. 17. On this passage St. John Chrysostom says, "Poterat dicere; si me amas abjice pecunias, jejunia exerce, super humum dormi, macera te laboribus. Nunc vero ait; Pasce oves meas."—Lib. 2, de Sacr., c. 1. On the word *meas*, St. Augustine remarks that our Lord wished to say, "Sicut meas pasce, non sicut tuas; gloriam meam in

eis quære, non tuam ; lucra mea, non tua." Tract., 125, in Joan., n. 5. In these words the saint has taught that he who desires to labour for the salvation of souls, should seek neither his own glory nor his own gain, but only the advancement of the divine glory. After reading the lives of the holy martyrs, and of the holy workmen in God's vineyard, St. Teresa said that she envied the latter more than the former, on account of the great glory which they who labour for the conversion of sinners, give to God. St. Catherine of Sienna used to kiss the ground which had been trodden by priests employed in saving souls. Such was her zeal for the salvation of sinners, that she desired to be placed at the mouth of hell, that no soul might enter into that land of torment. And what do we, who are priests, say? What do we do? We see so many souls perish, and shall we remain idle spectators of their perdition?

16. St. Paul said that to obtain the salvation of his neighbours he would have consented to be separated from Jesus Christ, that is, according to commentators, for a time : " Optabam.....ego ipse anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis."—Rom., ix. 3. St. John Chrysostom desired to be blind, provided the souls under his care were converted : " Millies optarem ipse esse cæcus, si per hoc liceret animas vestras convertere."—Hom. 3, in act. ap. St. Bonaventure declared that he would have accepted as many deaths as there are sinners in the world, that all might be saved—Stim. div. amor., p. 2, c. 11. During a winter which he spent among the heretics of Chablais, St. Francis de Sales used to creep over a river on a beam of ice, with great risk and inconvenience to himself, in order to preach to them. Being in Naples during the great revolution of 1647, and seeing the great loss of souls which it caused, St. Cajetan felt such an intense sorrow that he died of grief. St. Ignatius used to say that he would rather live uncertain of his eternal lot than die with a certainty of salvation, provided he could continue to assist souls. Behold the zeal for souls which animated priests who loved God. And, still, in order to avoid a trifling

inconvenience, or through fear of illness, some even among those who are charged with the care of souls, withhold the aid of their ministry. St. Charles Borromeo used to say, that a pastor of souls, who wishes to have every convenience, and to take all the precautions which may be useful to health, shall never be able to fulfil his duties. Hence he would add that a parish priest should not go to bed till after the third paroxysm of fever.

17. "Si Deum amatis," says St. Augustine, "omnes ad amorem Dei rapite." He who truly loves God does every thing in his power to draw all to his love, and says, with David: "Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum."—Ps. xxxiii. 4. He goes in every direction: exhorting in the pulpit and in the confessional, in the public places and in private houses, saying, brethren, let us love God, let us praise his name, in words and works.

SECTION III.

How secure the priest who labours for the salvation of souls renders his own salvation, and how great the reward which he shall receive in heaven.

18. The priest who has laboured for the salvation of souls, can hardly die a bad death. "Cum effuderis esurienti animam tuam," says the Prophet Isaias, "et animam afflictam repleveris, orietur in tenebris lux tua .....Et requiem tibi dabit Dominus, et implebit splendoribus animam tuam, et ossa tua liberabit."—Isa., lviii. 10, 11. If you have spent your life in assisting a soul in need, and have consoled her in her afflictions, in the darkness of your temporal death, the Lord shall fill you with light, and shall deliver you from eternal death. This was the doctrine of St. Augustine: "Animam salvasti," says the holy doctor, "animam tuam prædestinasti." And long before, the apostle, St. James, said, "Qui converti fecerit peccatorem, ab errore viæ suæ, salvabit animam ejus, (that is, his own soul, as appears from the the Greek text,) a morte, et operiet multitudinem

peccatorum."—Ep., v. 20. A priest of the Society of Jesus who during life devoted a great deal of time to the conversion of sinners, died with joy and confidence of salvation, which some considered to be excessive. Hence, he was told, that at death we should entertain sentiments of fear as well as of confidence. He answered: Have I served Mahomet? I have served a God, who is so grateful and faithful; why, then, should I fear? When St. Ignatius of Loyola declared, that in order to assist souls, he would remain on earth in an uncertainty about his salvation, though he was certain that by dying he should be saved, a person said: But, father, it is not prudent to expose your own soul to danger for the salvation of others. But, replied the saint, is God a tyrant, who after seeing me risk my salvation in order to gain souls, would send me to hell.

19. After having saved the Jews from the hands of the Philistines, by the victory which he won with so much personal danger, Jonathan was condemned to death by Saul for having, contrary to his orders, eaten a little honey. But the people cried out, "Ergone Jonathas morietur, qui fecit salutem hanc in Israel."—1 Reg., xiv. 45. Why, O king, said they, should Jonathan be put to death after having saved us all from destruction? Thus they obtained his pardon. The priest who has saved souls, may well expect a similar reward on the day of his death. These souls shall come and say to Jesus Christ: Will you, O Lord, send to hell the priest who has delivered us from eternal misery? And if Saul remitted the punishment of death at the prayers of the people, surely God will not refuse to pardon such a priest for the prayers of the souls that are his friends in heaven. Priests who have laboured for the salvation of souls shall hear from God himself the announcement of eternal rest: "Amado jam dicit spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis; opera enim illorum sequuntur illos. Apoc., xiv. 13. Oh! what consolation and confidence shall the remembrance of having gained a soul to Jesus Christ, infuse at the hour of death? As repose is sweet to him who is

oppressed with fatigue: "Dulcis est somnus operanti," (Eccl., v. 11.) so death is sweet to a priest who has laboured for God.

20. St. Gregory says that the more souls a sinner shall have converted from their sins, the sooner he shall be absolved from his own transgressions: "Tanto celerius quisque a suis peccatis absolvitur, quanto per ejus vitam et linguam aliorum animæ salvantur." —P. 2, stim. past. c. 7. He who has the good fortune of being employed in converting sinners, has a great mark of predestination, and of being written in the book of life. This, the apostle insinuated when, in speaking of those who assisted him in the conversion of nations, he said: "Etiam rogo et te germane compar; adjuva illas quæ mecum laboraverunt in evangelio cum Clemente et cæteris adjutoribus meis quorum nomina, (mark these words,) sunt in libro vitæ."—Phil., iv. 3.

21. With regard to the great reward which priests who labour for souls shall receive, Daniel said: "Fulgebunt.....qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos quasi stellæ in perpetuas æternitates."—Dan., xii. 3. As we now see the stars shine in the firmament, so the priest who converts souls to God, shall shine among the blessed in the empyreal heaven with a brilliant light of glory. If, says St. Gregory, he who rescues a man from temporal death, deserves a great reward, how much greater shall be the recompense of a priest who delivers a soul from eternal death, and brings her to eternal life? "Si magna mercede est dignum a morte eripere carnem quandoque morituram, quanti est meriti a morte animam liberare sine fine victuram?"—Mor., lib. 19, c. 16. And before him, our Saviour said: "Qui autem fecerit et docuerit, hic magnus vocabitur in regno cœlorum."—Matth., v. 19. How great shall be the chastisement in hell of a damned priest, who by his scandals has perverted many souls? On the other hand, will not God, whose liberality in rewarding virtue, surpasses his severity in punishing vice, give great glory in heaven to the good priest who by his labours shall have gained many souls.

22. St. Paul placed the hope of his eternal crown in the salvation of those whom he had converted to God, and trusted that they should procure for him a great recompense for eternity: "Quæ est enim nostra spes aut gaudium aut corona gloriæ? Nonne vos ante Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum estis in adventu ejus?"—1 Thes. ii. 19. St. Gregory says that a priest who works in the Lord's vineyard, obtains as many crowns as he gains souls to God: "Tot coronas sibi multiplicat quot Deo animas lucrifacit." We read in the Canticles, "Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni coronaberis.....de cubilibus leonum, de montibus pardorum."—iv. 8. Behold the promise of the Lord to him who is employed in the conversion of sinners—the souls that were once wild beasts and monsters of hell, but were afterwards converted and became dear to God, shall be so many gems adorning the crown of the priest who has brought them back to the path of virtue. A priest who is damned does not go to hell alone, and the priest that is saved is certainly not saved alone. When St. Philip Neri died and went to heaven, the Lord sent to meet him all the souls he had saved. The same is related of that great servant of God, Brother Cherubim of Spoleto. He was seen entering heaven accompanied by many thousands of souls that had been saved by his labours. It is also related of the venerable Father Lewis la Nusa, that he was seen in heaven sitting on a lofty throne, at the foot of which were seated all the souls that he had converted.

23. The poor husbandman suffers toils and sweats in sowing and cultivating the ground, and in reaping the crop; but all his labours are superabundantly compensated by the joy of the harvest. "Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds; but coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves."—Ps. cxxv. 6. It is true that in the work of bringing souls to God, many pains and labours are endured; but the labourer shall be recompensed with immense superabundance by the joy which he shall feel in presenting to Jesus Christ in the valley of Josaphat, all the souls he had saved.

24. Nor should the priest who labours without success to bring souls to God, be disheartened nor turned away from so noble a work. Beloved priest, says St. Bernard, be not discouraged by your want of success, but rest secure of the reward which awaits you. God does not require of you to save souls: labour for their salvation, and he will reward you, not in proportion to your success, but according to the toils you have endured: "Noli diffidere, curam exigeris, non curationem. Audisti? curam illius habe et non sana illum.....Unusquisque secundum suum laborem accipiet, non secundum proventum: Dicente scriptura (1 Cor., iii. 8.) Reddet Deus mercedem laborum; unusquisque autem proprium mercedem accipit secundum suum laborem."—Lib. 4, de cons., c. 2. St. Bonaventure confirms this doctrine, and says that a priest shall not merit less for those who draw little or no profit from his labours, than from the souls that reap great benefit from them: "Non minus meretur in illis qui deficiunt vel modicum proficiunt quam in his qui maxime proficiunt. Non enim dicit apostolus: Unusquisque propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum profectum, sed secundum laborem."—De sex alis, &c., cap. 3. The same saint adds, that the husbandman who cultivates the barren and rocky soil, merits a greater reward though he reaps less fruit: "In terra sterili et saxosa erit fructus paucior, sed pretium majus."—Ibid. He meant to say, that a priest who endeavours, though without success, to bring back an obstinate sinner to God, shall have a greater reward, because his labour is greater.

SECTION IV.

On the end, the means, and the labours of a Priest who has zeal.

25. If we wish to receive from God the reward of our labours for the salvation of souls, we must do all not through human respect, nor for our own honour or temporal gain, but only for God and for his glory;

otherwise, instead of a reward we shall receive punishment. Great should be our folly, says St. Joseph Calasanctius, were we to seek from men a temporal remuneration for our labours. The office of saving souls is in itself very dangerous. "Maximum periculum," says St. Bernard, "de factis alterius rationem reddere." And St. Gregory writes, "Quot regendis subditis (sacerdos) præest, reddendæ apud eum rationis tempore, ut ita dicam, tot animas solus habet."—24. Mor., cap. 30. With the divine aid, we shall be able to avoid sin and merit a reward in the work of saving others; but he who performs this work for any other end than to please God, shall be abandoned by God; and without the divine assistance, how shall he be able to avoid sin? And how, says St. Bonaventure, shall they avoid sin who "receive holy orders, seeking not the salvation of souls, but temporal gain," or whose motive, as St. Prosper says, is not to become better, but richer: not more holy, but more honoured?—Lib. 1, de vita Con., cap. 2. When, says Peter de Blois, there is question of obtaining a benefice, do persons ask how many souls may be gained, or do they not inquire rather about the amount of its revenues? "In promotionibus prima quæstio est quæ sit summa reddituum?" "Many," says the apostle, "seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."—Phil., ii. 21. Oh! execrable abuse, says Father John d'Avila, to make heaven subordinate to earth! St. Bernard observes that when our Lord intrusted his sheep to St. Peter, he said: "Pasce oves meas; non mulce non tende."—Declam., cap. 11, n. 12. The author of the *Imperfect Work* says: "Mercenarii sumus conducti, sicut ergo nemo conducit mercenarium ut solum manducet, sic et nos non ideo vocati sumus a Christo ut solum operemur quæ ad nostrum pertinet usum sed ad gloriam Dei."—Hom. 34, Mat. Hence St. Gregory says of priests, "Non præesse se hominibus gaudeant, sed prodesse."—Past. 1, part. 1, cap. 5.

26. The glory of God, then, must be the sole end of the priest who labours for souls. With regard to the means which a priest should adopt in order to gain

souls to the Lord, the first must be to attend to the perfection of his own soul. The sanctity of the priest is the principal means of converting sinners. St. Eucherius says that priests by the power of their sanctity sustain the world: "Hi onus totius orbis portant humeris sanctitatis."—Hom. 3. The priest, as mediator, is charged with the office of making peace between God and men: "Mediatoris officium," says St. Thomas, "est conjungere eos inter quos est mediator."—Supp. 36, q. 1, art. 2. But he who is a mediator must not be hateful to the person before whom he has to intercede; otherwise, he will increase his wrath. "Cum is qui displicet," says St. Gregory, "ad intercedendum mittitur, irati animus ad deteriora provocatur."—Past. part. 1. Hence the saint adds, "Oportet munda sit manus quæ diluere aliorum sordes curat."—Ibid., c. 9. Hence St. Bernard concludes that a priest, in order to be fit to convert sinners, must first purify his own conscience, and afterwards the conscience of others: "Rectus ordo postulat ut prius propriam, deinde alienas curare studeas conscientias." St. Philip Neri used to say, give me ten zealous priests and I will convert the whole world. What did not a solitary St. Francis Xavier do in the East? It is related that he alone converted ten millions of pagans to the faith. What did not a St. Patrick, a St. Vincent Ferrer do in Europe? A single priest of moderate learning, who loves God ardently, will convert more souls to God than a hundred priests of great learning and little zeal.

27. Secondly, he who wishes to reap an abundant harvest of souls, must devote a good deal of time to mental prayer. In prayer he must first receive from God sentiments of piety, and afterwards communicate them to others: "Quod in aure auditis prædicate super tecta."—Mat., x. 27. It is necessary, says St. Bernard, to be first a reservoir and then a canal: "Sacerdos, concham te exhibebis, non canalem, canales hodie in ecclesia multos habemus, conchas vero perpaucas."—Serm. 18. The saints have converted more souls by their prayers than by their labours.

28. The works in which a zealous priest should be employed are, first, the correction of sinners. Priests who see insults offered to God and remain silent, are called by Isaias *mute dogs:* "Canes muti, non valentes latrare."—lvi. 10. But to these mute dogs shall be imputed all the sins which they could have, but have not prevented: "Nolite tacere, ne populi peccata vobis imputentur."—Albinus, epist. 18. Some priests abstain from reproving sinners, because they do not wish to disturb their peace of mind; but, says St. Gregory, for this peace which they desire, they shall miserably lose peace with God: "Dum pacem desiderant, pravos mores nequaquam redarguunt; et consentiendo perversis, ab auctoris se pace disjungunt."—Past., p. 3, admon. 23. An animal falls, exclaims St. Bernard, and many are found to lift it; a soul falls, and no one is found to raise her up: "Cadit asinus, et est qui adjuvat; cadet homo, et non est qui sublevet." Yes, sinners are not corrected, although, according to St. Gregory, priests are specially appointed by God to point out the path of virtue to those who go astray: "Eligitur viam errantibus demonstrare." Hence St. Leo adds: "Sacerdos qui alium ab errore non revocat, seipsum errare demonstrat." St. Gregory writes that we kill as many souls as we see committing sin without endeavouring to apply a remedy: "Nos qui sacerdotes vocamur, quotidie occidimus quos ad mortem ire tepide videmus.

29. A zealous priest ought to be employed in preaching. By preaching, the world has been, as the apostle says, converted to the faith of Jesus Christ: "Fides ex auditu; auditus autem per verbum Christi."—Rom., x. 17. And by preaching, the faith and the fear of God are preserved in the hearts of the faithful. Priests who feel themselves unable to preach, should at least endeavour, as often as possible, in their conversation with friends or relatives, to edify by words of edification, by relating examples of virtues practised by the saints, by inculcating some maxim of eternity, by impressing on them the vanity of the world, the importance of salvation, the certainty of

death, the peace enjoyed by those who are in the grace of God, or some similar truths.

30. Thirdly, he should be occupied in assisting the dying, which is a work of charity most dear to God, and most conducive to the salvation of souls; for the dying are more strongly tempted by the devils, and are less able to assist themselves. St. Philip Neri frequently saw angels suggesting words to priests who were attending dying persons. For parish priests this work is an obligation of justice, but for every priest it is a duty of charity. It may be performed with advantage by every priest, even by those who have not talent for preaching. In attending the sick, a priest may be of great service to their friends and relatives. That is the fittest time for spiritual discourses. On such an occasion it is even unbecoming in a priest to speak of any thing but of God and of spiritual things. But let it be remembered that he who performs this office must use great caution, that he may not be an occasion of ruin to himself or others. Moreover, he who cannot preach should at least labour in teaching the Christian doctrine to the children and the poor; many of whom in the rural districts, in consequence of not being able to go often to the church, live in ignorance of even the principal mysteries of faith.

31. Lastly, it is necessary to be persuaded that the work which is most conducive to the salvation of souls is the administration of the sacrament of penance. The venerable Lewis Florillo, of the order of St. Dominick, used to say, that by preaching, the priest casts out the net, but by hearing confessions he draws it ashore, and takes the fish. But some may say this is a very perilous office. There is no doubt, dearly beloved priest, says St. Bernard, that to become the judge of consciences is attended with much danger; but you shall fall into greater danger, if through sloth or excessive fear, you neglect to fulfil this office when God calls you to it. "Væ tibi si præes," says the saint, "sed væ gravius, si quia præesse metuis præesse refugis." We have already spoken of the obligation of every priest to employ the talent which

God has given him that he may save souls; and we have already said that at his ordination a priest is destined in a special manner for the administration of the sacrament of penance. But you may say that you are not qualified for this office, because you have not studied theology. But do you not know that a priest is bound to study? "Labia.....sacerdotis custodient scientiam; et legem requirent ex ore ejus."—Malach., ii. 7. If you did not intend to study in order to be able to assist your neighbour, why did you become a priest? Who, says the Lord, asked you to take holy orders? "Quis quæsivit de manibus vestris ut ambularetis in atriis meis?"—Isa., i. 12. Who, asks St. Chrysostom, has forced you to become a priest? "Quisnam ad id coegit?" Before your ordination, adds the saint, you ought to have examined your fitness for this duty; but now that you are a priest you must work and not examine; and if you are not fit for the work, you must qualify yourself for it. "Tempus nunc agendi et non consultandi."—De sacerd., lib. 4, cap. 1. To excuse yourself now on the ground of ignorance, continues the holy doctor, is to excuse one sin by another: "Neque licet ad ignorantiam confugere, quando qui delegatus est ut alienam emendet ignorantiam, ignorantiam prætendere minime poterit; hoc nomine supplicium nulla excusatione poterit depellere, quamvis unius duntaxat animæ jactura acciderit."—Idem., lib. 6, c. 1. Some priests read many useless books, and neglect to study the science which may enable them to save souls. St. Prosper says that such priests violate justice: "Contra justitiam faciunt qui otiosum studium fructuosæ utilitati regendæ multitudinis anteponunt."—Sive Jul. Pomer., de vita cont.

32. In fine, it is necessary to be persuaded that the priest should seek nothing but the glory of God and salvation of souls. Hence St. Sylvester ordained that with regard to ecclesiastics, the days of the week should be called by no other name than that of *Feriæ*, or vacant days. "Quotidie clericus, abjecta cæterarum rerum cura, uni Deo prorsus vocare debet."—In lect. brev., dic. 31, dec. The Gentiles themselves

used to say that priests should attend only to the things of God, and therefore they forbid their priests to exercise the office of magistrates that they might be entirely devoted to the worship of their gods. After he had been appointed by God to promote his honour, and the observance of his law, Moses spent a good deal of his time in settling disputes. Jethro justly reproved him, saying: "Stulto labore consumeris .....Esto tu populo in his quæ ad Deum pertinent."—Exod., xviii. 18, 19. Before you were ordained priest, says St. Athanasius, you might devote yourself to any occupation you wished, but now that you are a priest, you must be employed in the fulfilment of the office for which you are destined: "Id scire oportet, te priusquam ordinabaris, tibi vixisse; ordinatum autem, illis quibus ordinatus es."—Epis. ad Drac., n. 2. And what is the nature of this office? One of its principal duties is, as we have shown, to labour for the salvation of souls. This doctrine is confirmed by St. Prosper, who says: "Sacerdotibus proprie animarum sollicitudo commissa est."—Lib. 2, de vita cont., c. 2.

EIGHTH CHAPTER.

On Vocation to the Priesthood.

1. To enter into any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation, it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. But if for all states a vocation is necessary, it is necessary in a particular manner for the ecclesiastical state. "Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro."—Joan., x. 1, 2. Hence he who takes holy orders without a call from God, is convicted of theft, in taking by force a dignity which God does not wish to bestow upon him. "Latrones et fures," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "appellat eos qui se ultro, et non sibi datam desuper gratiam,

obtrudunt."—S. Cyril Alex., vel alius in Joan., x. 10. And before him, St. Paul said the same: "Nec quisquam sumat sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo tanquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum; Filius meus es tu."—Heb., v. 4, 5. No one, then, however learned, prudent, and holy he may be, can thrust himself into the sanctuary unless he is first called and introduced by God. Jesus Christ himself, who among all men was certainly the most learned and the most holy, "plenus gratiæ et veritatis, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi." (Coloss., ii. 3,) Jesus Christ, I say, required a divine call in order to assume the dignity of the priesthood. In entering the sanctuary, even after God himself had called them to it, the saints trembled. When his bishop ordered St. Augustine to receive ordination, the saint, through humility, regarded the command as a chastisement of his sins: "Vis mihi facta est merito peccatorum meorum."—Ep. 21, alias 148. To escape the priesthood, St. Ephrem of Syria feigned madness; and St. Ambrose pretended to be a man of a cruel disposition. To avoid the priesthood, St. Ammonius the Monk, cut of his ears, and threatened to pluck out his tongue, if the persons who pressed him to take holy orders, should continue to molest him. In a word, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "Omnes sanctos reperio divini ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes."—Hom. 1, de fest. pasch. The saints have dreaded the dignity of the priesthhod as a burden of enormous weight. Can any one, then, says St. Cyprian, be so daring as to attempt of himself, and without a divine call, to assume the priesthood? "Ita est aliquis sacrilegæ temeritatis, ac perditæ mentis ut putet sine Dei judicio fieri sacerdotem."—Ep. 55, ad Cornel.

2. As a vassal who would of himself take the office of minister, should violate the authority of his sovereign, so he who intrudes himself into the sanctuary without a vocation, violates the authority of God. How great should be the temerity of the subject, who without the appointment, and even in opposition to

the will of the monarch, should attempt to administer the royal patrimony, to decide lawsuits, to command the army, and to assume viceregal authority? "Auderetne, aliquis vestrum," says St. Bernard, "terreni alicujus reguli non præcipiente aut etiam prohibente eo, accipere ministeria, negotia dispensare?" And are not priests, as St. Prosper says, the administrators of the royal house: "Dispensatores regiæ domus?" Are they not, according to St. Ambrose, the "leaders and rectors of the flock of Christ?" according to St. Chrysostom, the "interpreters of the divine judgments," and according to St. Denis the "vicars of Christ." Will any one who knows all this, dare to become the minister of God without a divine call? To think of exercising royal authority, is, according to St. Peter Chrysologus, criminal in a subject: "Regnum velle servum, crimen est."—Serm. 25. To intrude into the house of a private individual, in order to dispose of his goods and to manage his business, would be considered temerity; for, even a private individual has the right of appointing the administrators of his affairs. And will you, says St. Bernard, without being called or introduced by God, intrude into his house to take charge of his interests and to dispose of his goods: "Quid istud temeritatis est, imo quid insaniæ est? tu irreverenter irruis, nec vocatus, nec introductus."—De vita cler., c. 3. The Council of Trent has declared that the Church regards not as her minister, but as a robber, the man who audaciously assumes the priesthood without a vocation: "Decernit sancta synodus eos qui ea (ministeria) propria temeritate sibi tribuunt, omnes non ecclesiæ ministros, sed fures et latrones per ostium non ingressos habendos esse."—Sess. 25, cap. 4. Such priests shall labour and toil, but their labours shall profit them little before God. On the contrary, the works which are meritorious in others, shall deserve chastisement for them. Should a servant who is commanded by his master to take care of the house, through his own caprice labour in cultivating the vineyard, he may toil and sweat, but instead of being rewarded he shall be chastised by his master. Thus,

in the first place, because they are not conformable to the divine will, the Lord shall not accept the toils of the man who, without a vocation, intrudes himself into the priesthood. "I have no pleasure in you," saith the Lord of Hosts, "and I will not receive a gift of your hand."—Mal., i. 10. In the end God will not reward, but will punish the works of the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation. "What stranger soever cometh to it, (the tabernacle,) shall be slain."—Num., i. 51.

3. Whosoever, then, aspires to holy orders, must, in the first place, carefully examine if his vocation is from God. "Quoniam dignitas magna est," says St. Chrysostom, "revera divina sententia comprobanda est, ut quis ea dignus adducatur in medium."—Hom. 5, in 1 ad Tim., i. Now to know whether his call is from God, he should examine the marks of a divine vocation. He, says St. Luke, who wishes to build a tower, first computes the necessary expenses, in order to know if he has the means of completing the edifice: "Quis enim ex vobis volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum."—Lucæ, xiv. 28. Let us now see what are the marks of a divine vocation to the sacerdotal state. Nobility is not a mark of a divine vocation. To know, says St. Jerome, whether a person should become the guide of the people in what regards their eternal salvation, we must consider not nobility of blood, but sanctity of life: "Principatum in populos non sanguini deferendum esse sed vitæ."—In epist. ad Tit., i. 5. St. Gregory says the same: "Quos dignos divina probet electio secundum vitæ, non generis, meritum. Neither is the will of parents a mark of a divine vocation. In inducing a child to take priesthood, they seek not his spiritual welfare, but their own interest, and the advancement of the family. "Matres," says St. John Chrysostom, or another author, "corpora natorum amant, animas contemnunt; desiderant illos valere in sæculo isto, et non curant quid sint passuri in altero."—Hom. 35, Op. imp. in Mat. We must be persuaded, as Jesus Christ has said, that with regard

to the choice of a state of life, we have no enemies more dangerous than our own relatives: "Et inimici hominis domestici ejus."—Mat., x. 36. Hence the Redeemer adds: "Qui amat patrem aut matrem plusquam me, non est me dignus."—Ibid., xxxvii. Oh! how many priests shall we see condemned on the day of judgment for having taken holy orders to please their relatives.

4. When a young man, in obedience to the call of God, wishes to become a religious, what efforts do not his parents make, either through passion, or for the interest of the family, to dissuade him from following his vocation? It is necessary to know that, according to the common opinion of theologians, this cannot be excused from mortal sin. See what I have written on this subject in my moral theology, lib. 4, n. 77. Parents who act in this manner are guilty of a double sin. They sin first against charity, because they are the cause of a grievous evil to the child whom God has called to religion. A person who dissuades even a stranger from following a religious vocation, is guilty of a grievous sin. They sin secondly against piety; for by their obligation to educate a child, they are bound to promote his greater spiritual welfare. Some ignorant confessors tell their penitents who wish to become religious, that in this they should obey their parents, and abandon their vocation if their parents object to their entering religion. These confessors adopt the opinion of Luther, who taught that a person sins by entering religion without the consent of his parents. But the doctrine of Luther was rejected by the holy Fathers, and by the Tenth Council of Toledo, in which it was decreed that children who had attained their fourteenth year, may lawfully enter religion even against the will of their parents. A child is bound to obey his parents in what regards his education and the government of the house; but with regard to the choice of a state of life, he should obey God by embracing the state to which God calls him. When parents seek to be obeyed in this matter, we must answer them in the words of the apostles to the princes of the Jews:

"Si justum est in conspectu Dei vos potius audire quam Deum, judicate."—Act., iv. 19.

5. St. Thomas expressly teaches (2. 2. q. 10. a. 5.) that in the choice of a state of life, children are not obliged to obey their parents. And the saint says that when there is question of a vocation to religion, a person is not bound even to consult his relatives; for on such occasions, self-interest changes relatives into enemies: "Propinqui enim carnis in hoc negotio amici non sunt, sed inimici, juxta sententiam Domini; inimici hominis domestici ejus."—2. 2. q. 189, a. 10. Parents are, as St. Bernard says, content to see their children damned with them, rather than see them saved by entering religion and separating from the family. "O durum patrem! O sævam matrem! quorum consolatio mors filii est: qui malunt nos perire cum eis quam regnare sine eis."—Epist. 111. But when a person wishes to enter the sacerdotal state, in which he may be able to serve the family, what efforts do not his parents make to procure his ordination, either by lawful or unlawful means, whether he is called or not called to the priesthood? And with what severity do they not treat him if, through remorse of conscience, he refuse to take holy orders? Barbarous fathers! Let us, with St. Bernard, call them not parents but murderers! "Non parentes, sed peremptores." Unhappy fathers! miserable children! I say again. How many shall we see condemned in the valley of Josephat for having interfered with the vocation of others, or for not having attended to their own? For, as we shall hereafter demonstrate, the salvation of each individual depends on following the divine call.

6. But let us return to our subject. Neither nobility of birth, nor the will of parents, are marks of a vocation to the priesthood; nor is talent or fitness for the offices of a priest, a sign of vocation; for along with talent, a holy life and a divine call are necessary. What, then, are the marks of a divine vocation to the ecclesiastical state? The first is a good intention. It is necessary to enter the sanctuary by the door, but there is no other door than Jesus

Christ: "Ego sum ostium ovium.....Per me si quis introierit salvabitur."—Joan., x. 7—9. To enter, then, by the door, is to become a priest not to please relatives, nor to advance the family, nor for the sake of self-interest, or self-esteem, but to serve God, to propagate his glory, and to save souls. "Si enim quis," says a learned author, "liber ab omni vitioso affectu, ad clerum, Deo serviendi causa, et salutis populi gratia solum, se conferat, iste vocari a Deo præsumitur."—Contin. Tournely, de sacer. ord., q. 4, art. 4, in fin. Another author asserts that he who is impelled by ambition, interest, or a motive of his own glory, is called not by God but by the devil. "Ambitione duceris vel avaritia? inhias honori? non te vocat Deus, sed diabolus tentat."—Hallerius, ap. 1, sec. 3, cap. 2, sec. 4. But, adds St. Anselm, he who takes priesthood through such unworthy motives, shall receive not a blessing but a malediction from God: "Qui enim se ingerit et propriam gloriam quærit, gratiæ Dei rapinam facit; et ideo non accipit benedictionem, sed maledictionem."—In c. 5, ad Hebr.

7. The second mark is the talent and learning necessary for the fulfilment of the duties of a priest. Priests must be masters to teach the people the law of God. "Labia.....sacerdotis custodient scientiam; et legem requirent ex ore ejus."—Malach., ii. 7. Sidonius Apollinare used to say: "Medici parum docti multos occidunt." An ignorant priest, particularly a confessor, who teaches false doctrines and gives bad counsels, shall be the ruin of many souls; because, in consequence of being a priest, his errors are easily believed. Hence Ivone Carnotensis has written: "Nulli ad sacros ordines promovendi, nisi quos vita et doctrina idoneos probat."—Epist. 213. A priest must not only have a competent knowledge of all the rubrics necessary for the celebration of Mass, but must be also acquainted with the principal things which regard the sacrament of penance. It is true, as we have said in the preceding chapter, (number 5,) that every priest is not obliged to hear confessions, unless there is great necessity for his assist-

ance in the district in which he lives; however, every priest is bound to be acquainted with what a priest must ordinarily know in order to be able to hear the confessions of dying persons; that is, he is bound to know when he has faculties to absolve, when and how he ought to give absolution to the sick, whether conditionally or absolutely; what obligation he ought to impose on them, if they are under any censure. He should also know at least the general principles of moral theology.

8. The third mark of an ecclesiastical vocation is positive virtue. Hence, in the first place, the person who is to be ordained, should be a man of innocent life, and should not be contaminated by sins. The Apostle requires that they who are to be ordained priests, should be free from every crime. "Et constituas per civitates presbyteros, sicut et ego disposui tibi. Si quis sine crimine est," &c.—Tit., i. 5. In ancient times, a person who had committed a single mortal sin could never be ordained, as we learn from the First Council of Nice: "Qui confessi sunt peccata ecclesiasticus ordo non recipit." Can. 9. And St. Jerome says that it was not enough for a person to be free from sin at the time of his ordination, but that it was, moreover, necessary that he should not have fallen into mortal sin since the time of his baptism: "Ex eo tempore quo in Christo renatus est nulla peccati conscientia remordeatur."—In ep. ad Tit., i. It is true that this rigorous discipline has ceased in the Church, but it has been always at least required that he who had fallen into grievous sins, should purify his conscience for a considerable time before his ordination. This we may infer from a letter to the Archbishop of Rheims, in which Alexder III commanded that a deacon who had wounded another deacon, if he sincerely repented of his sin, might, after being absolved, and after performing the penance enjoined, be permitted again to exercise his order; and that if he afterwards led a perfect life, he might be promoted to priesthood. "Et si perfectæ vitæ (these are the words of the pontiff,) et conversionis fuerit, eum in presbyterum (poteris) or-

dinare."—C. 1, de diac. Qui cler. vel vov., &c.—He, then, who finds himself bound by a habit of any vice, cannot take any holy order without incurring the guilt of mortal sin. "Horreo," says St. Bernard, "considerans unde et quo vocaris, præsertim cum nullum incurrerit pœnitentiæ tempus. Et quidem rectus ordo requirit ut prius propriam, deinde alienas curare studeas conscientias."—Ep. 8, ad Brunon. Of those daring sinners, who, though full of bad habits, take priesthood, an ancient author says: "Multo digniores erant ad catastam pœnalem quam ad sacerdotium trahi."—Gyldas sapiens, tom. 5, Bibl. PP. They, then, who are still subject to the habit of any sin, should not be promoted to holy orders. "Non sunt promovendi," says St. Isidore, "ad regimen ecclesiæ qui adhuc vitiis subjacent."—Lib. 3, de summo bono, cap. 34.

9. But he who intends to ascend the altar must not only be free from sin, but must have also begun to walk in the path of perfection, and have acquired a habit of virtue. In our moral theology (lib. 6, n. 63.) we have shown in a distinct dissertation, (and this is the common opinion,) that if a person in the habit of any vice, wish to be ordained, it is not enough for him to have the dispositions necessary for the sacrament of penance, but that he must also have the dispositions required for receiving the sacrament of order; otherwise he is unfit for both: and should he receive absolution with the intention of taking orders without the necessary dispositions, he and the confessor who absolves him, shall be guilty of a grievous sin. For it is not enough for those who wish to take holy orders, to have got out of the state of sin; they must, also, according to the words of Alexander III, (si perfectæ vitæ et conversionis fuerit,) cited in the preceding paragraph, have the positive virtue necessary for the ecclesiastical state. From the words of the pontiff we learn that a person who has done penance may exercise an order already received, but he who has only done penance, cannot take a higher order. The angelic doctor teaches the same doctrine: "Ordines sacri præixigunt sanctitatem: unde

pondus ordinum imponendum parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis, id est ab humore vitiorum."—2. 2. q. 189, a. 1, ad 3. This is conformable to what St. Denis had written long before. "In divino omni non audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus, et Deo simillimus,"—Cap. 3, de eccl. hier. For this St. Thomas adduces two reasons: the first is that as he who takes orders is raised above seculars in dignity, so he should be superior to them in sanctity: "Ad idoneam executionem ordinum non sufficit bonitas qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens, ut sicut illi qui ordinem suscipiunt super plebem constituuntur gradu ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis.....Et ideo præexigitur gratia quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumeretur in plebem Christi."—Suppl., q. 33, a. 1, ad 3. The second reason is, that by his ordination a priest is appointed to exercise the most sublime ministry on the altar, for which greater sanctity is required than for the religious state: "Quia per sacrum ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status."—2. 2. q. 100, ad 84, a. 8.

10. Hence the apostle forbid Timothy to ordain neophytes (1 Tim. iii. 6.); that is, according to St. Thomas, neophytes in perfection as well as neophytes in age; "Qui non solum ætate, neopyhti sunt, sed et qui neophyti sunt perfectione." The Council of Trent has said: "Sciant episcopi debere ad hos (sacros) ordines assumi dignos duntaxat, et quorum probata vita senectus sit, juxta verba scripturæ; ætas senectutis vita immaculata."—Sap., iv. 9. And of this positive virtue, it is necessary according to St. Thomas, to have not a doubtful but a certain knowledge. (Suppl., q. 36, art. 4, ad. 3.) "Sed etiam habeatur certitudo de qualitate promovendorum." This, according to St. Gregory, is particularly necessary with regard to the virtue of chastity: "Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptam ministerium fuerit approbata."—Lib. 1. epist. 42.

With regard to chastity, the holy pontiff required a proof of many years: "Ne unquam ii qui ordinati sunt pereant, prius aspiciatur si vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit."—Ibid. From this we may infer that God will demand a terrible account of the parish priest who gives to persons aspiring to the priesthood, a testimony of their having frequented the sacraments and led exemplary lives, though they had neglected the frequentation of the sacraments, and had given scandal rather than good example. Such parish priests by these false attestations, given not through charity, as they pretend, but against the charity due to God and the Church, render themselves guilty of all the sins which shall be afterwards committed by the bad priests who were ordained in consequence of these testimonials. For, in this matter bishops trust to the testimony of parish priests, and are deceived. Nor should a parish priest in giving such attestations, trust the testimony of others; he cannot give them unless he is certain that what he attests is true, viz., that the ecclesiastic has really led an exemplary life, and has frequented the sacraments. And as a bishop cannot ordain any person unless he be a man of approved chastity, so a confessor cannot permit an incontinent penitent to receive ordination without having a moral certainty that he is free from the bad habit which he had contracted, and that he had acquired a habit of the virtue of chastity.

11. He who takes holy orders without the marks of a vocation, cannot be excused from the guilt of grievous sin. This is the doctrine of many theologians, of Habert, (de ord., p. 3, c. 1, sec. 2,) of Natalis Alexander, (de sacr. ord.) of Juenin, (disp. 8, q. 7. c. 1.) and of the Continuator of Tournely (de oblig. cler., tom. 3, c. 1, a. 1, concl. 3,). And before them St. Augustine taught the same. Speaking of the chastisement inflicted on Core, Dathan, and Abiron, who, without being called, attempted to exercise the sacerdotal functions, the holy doctor said: "Condemnati sunt ut daretur exemplum ne quis non sibi a Deo datum pontificatus munus invaderet, &c. Hoc patiuntur quicumque se in episcopatus aut presbyteratus

aut diaconatus officium conantur incedere."—Serm. 98. And the reason is, first, because he who trusts himself into the sanctuary without a divine call, cannot be excused from grievous presumption; secondly, because he shall be deprived of the congruous and abundant helps, without which, as Habert writes, he shall be absolutely able to comply with the obligations of his state, but shall fulfil them only with great difficulty. "Absolute quidem, sed non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit saluti suæ consulere." He shall be like a dislocated member, which can be used only with difficulty, and which causes deformity: "Manebitque in corpore ecclesiæ veluti membrum in corpore humano suis sedibus motum; servire utcumque potest, sed ægre admodum, et cum quadam deformitate.

12. Hence he shall expose himself to great danger of damnation. "Qui sciens et volens," writes Bishop Abelly, "nulla divinæ vocationis habita ratione, se in sacerdotium intruderet, haud dubie seipsum in apertissimum salutis, discrimine injiceret, peccando scilicet in spiritum sanctum; quod quidem peccatum vix aut rarissime dimitti ex evangelio discimus."—Sac. Christ., p. 1, c. 4. The Lord has declared that his wrath is provoked against those who wish to rule in his Church without being called by him: "Ipsi regnaverunt et non ex me.....Iratus est furor meus in eos."—Oseæ, viii. 4. On this passage St. Gregory says, "Ex se, et non ex arbitrio summi rectoris, regnant; nequa quam divinitus vocati sed sua cupidine accensi culmen regiminis rapiunt potius quam assequuntur." Pastor., p. 1, c. 1. How many intrigues, adulations, entreaties, and other means, do certain persons employ in order to procure ordination, not in obedience to the call of God, but through earthly motives? But woe to such men, says the Lord by the prophet Isaias: "Væ fillii desertores..... ut faceretis consilium et non ex me."—Isa., xxx. 1. On the day of judgment they shall claim a reward, but Jesus Christ shall cast them off. "Many will say to me in that day, have we not prophesied in thy name *(by preaching and teaching)* ? and cast out devils in thy name *(by absolving penitent sinners)*, and done

many miracles in thy name *(by correcting the wicked, by settling disputes, by converting sinners)*. And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity."—Matt., vii. 22, 23. Priests who have not been called, are indeed workmen and ministers of God, because they have received the sacerdotal character: but they are ministers of iniquity and rapine; because they have of their own will, and without a vocation, intruded themselves into the sheepfold. They have not, as St. Bernard says, received the keys, but have taken them by force: "Tollitis, non accipitis claves; de quibus Dominus queritur. Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me."—De cont. ad cler. They shall toil, but God shall not accept, he will, on the contrary, punish their works and labours, because they have not entered the sanctuary by the straight path: "Labor stultorum affliget eos qui nesciunt in urbem pergere."—Eccl., x. 15. The Church, says St. Leo, receives only those whom the Lord chooses, and by his election makes fit to be his ministers: "Eos ecclesia accipit quos Spiritus Sanctus præparaverit; et dignatio cœlestis gratiæ gignit."—In die assumpt. suæ. But, on the other hand, the Church rejects those whom, as St. Peter Damian has written, God has not called; for instead of promoting her welfare, they commit havoc among her members, and instead of edifying, they contaminate and destroy her children. "Nemo deterius ecclesiam lædit, cum non eos vocet Dominus."—Opusc, 2, contra cler., c. 2.

13. "Quos elegerit (Dominus) appropinquabunt ei." Num., xvi. 5. God will gladly admit into his presence all whom he has called to the priesthood, and will cast off the priest whom he has not chosen. St. Ephrem regards as lost the man who is so daring as to take the order of priesthood without a vocation: "Obstupesco ad ea quæ soliti sunt quidam insipientium audere; qui temere se conantur ingerere ad munus sacerdotii assumendum, licet non adsciti a gratia Christi; ignorantes miseri quod ignem æternum sibi accumulant."—De Sacerdot. And Peter de Blois has written: "Usurpati ausus sacerdotii sacrificium in sacrilegium, vitam convertit in mortem." He who

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errs in his vocation, exposes himself to greater danger than if he transgressed particular precepts; for if he violates a particular command, he may rise from his fall, and begin again to walk in the right path, but he who errs in his vocation, mistakes the way itself. Hence the longer he travels in it, the more distant he is from his home. To him we may justly apply the words of St. Augustine: "Bene curris, sed extra viam." It is necessary to be persuaded of the truth of what St. Gregory says, that our eternal salvation depends principally on embracing the state to which God has called us: "A vocatione pendet æternitas." The reason is evident: for it is God that destines, according to the order of his providence, his state of life for each individual, and according to the state to which he calls him, prepares for him abundant graces and suitable helps. "Ordine suo, non nostro, Spiritus Sancti gratia ministratur," says St. Cyprian; and according to the apostle, this is for each person the order of predestination: "Quos.....prædestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit, &c.: illos et glorificavit."—Rom., viii. 30. Thus to vocation succeeds justification, and to justification, glory, that is, the attainment of eternal life. He, then, who does not obey the call of God, shall neither be justified nor glorified. Father Granada justly said that vocation is the main wheel of our entire life. As in a clock, if the main wheel be spoiled, the entire clock is injured, so, says St. Gregory Nazianzen, if a person err in his vocation, his whole life shall be full of errors; for in the state to which God has not called him, he shall be deprived of the helps by which he can with facility lead a good life.

14. "Unusquisque," says St. Paul, "proprium donum habet.....alius quidem sic, alius vero sic."—1 Cor., vii. 7. The meaning of this passage, according to St. Thomas and the commentators, is, that the Lord gives to each one graces to fulfill with ease the obligations of the state to which he calls him. "Cuicumque datur," says the angelic doctor, "potentia aliqua divinitus, dantur omnia ea, per quæ executio illius possit congrue fieri."—Suppl., q. 33, a. 1. And

in another place he writes: "Illos quos Deus ad aliquid eligit, ita præparat et disponit ut ad id ad quod eliguntur inveniantur idonei secundum illud (2 Cor., iii.): sufficientia nostra ex Deo est, qui et idoneos nos fecit ministros novi testamenti."—3. q. 27. a. 4. As each person, then, shall be able to discharge with facility the office to which God elects him, so he shall be unfit for the fulfilment of the office to which God does not call him. The foot which is given to enable us to walk, cannot see; the eye, which is given to see, is incapable of hearing; and how shall he who is not chosen by God for the priesthood, be able to discharge its obligations? It belongs to the Lord to choose the workmen who are to cultivate his vineyard: "Ego elegi vos.....ut fructum afferatis."—Joan, xv. 16. Hence the Redeemer did not say, beg of men to go and gather the harvest; but he tells us to ask the master of the crop to send workmen to collect it: "Rogate Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam."—Lucæ, x. ii. Hence he also said: "Sicut misit me pater, et ego mitto vos."—Joan., xx. 21. When God calls, he himself, says St. Leo, gives the necessary helps: "Qui mihi honoris est auctor, ipse mihi fiet administrationum adjutor; dabit virtutem qui contulit dignitatem."—Serm. 1, in die assumpt. suæ." This is what Jesus Christ has said: "Ego sum ostium; per me si quis introierit, ingredietur et egredietur et pascua inveniet."—Joan., x. 9. *Ingredietur:* what the priest called by God undertakes, he shall easily accomplish without sin, and with merit. *Et egredietur:* he shall be in the midst of perils and occasions of sin, but with the divine aid he shall readily escape injury. *Et pascua inveniet:* finally, in consequence of being in the state in which God has placed him, he shall be assisted in all the duties of his ministry by special graces, which shall make him advance in perfection. Hence he will be able to say with confidence: "Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit, in loco pascuæ me collocavit."—Ps. xxii. 2.

15. But priests whom God has not sent to work in his Church, he shall abandon to eternal ignominy and destruction. "I did not send prophets," says the

Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, "yet they ran." He afterwards adds: "Therefore I will take you away, carrying you, and will forsake you.....and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten."—Jer., xxiii. 21, 39, 40. In order to be raised to the sublimity of the priesthood, it is necessary, as St. Thomas says, for a man "to be exalted and elevated by divine power, above the natural order of things," because he is appointed the sanctifier of the people, and the vicar of Jesus Christ. But in him who raises himself to so great a dignity, shall be verified the words of the Wise Man: "Postquam elevatus est in sublimi, stultus apparuit."—Prov., xxx. 32. Had he remained in the world, he should perhaps have been a virtuous layman; but having become a priest without a vocation, he shall be a bad priest, and instead of promoting the interest of religion, he shall do great injury to the Church. Of such priests the Roman Catechism says: "Hujus modi hominum genere nihil infelicius, nihil calamitosius Ecclesiæ esse potest."—De sacr. Ord. And what good can be expected from the priest who has entered the sanctuary without a vocation? "Impossible est," says St. Leo, "ut bono peragantur exitu, quæ sunt malo inchoata principio." St. Laurence Justinian has written: "Qualem oro fructum potest producere corrupta radix?"—Apud Catech. Rom., de ord. Our Saviour has said: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."—Mat., xv. 13. Hence Peter de Blois writes, that when God permits a person to be ordained without a vocation, the permission is not a grace but a chastisement. For, a tree which has not taken deep root, when exposed to the tempest, shall soon fall and be cast into the fire. "Ira est, non gratia, cum quis ponitur super ventum, nullas habens radices in soliditate virtutum." And St. Bernard says that he who has not lawfully entered into the sanctuary, shall continue to be unfaithful; and instead of procuring the salvation of souls, he shall be the cause of their death and perdition: "Qui non fideliter introivit quidni infideliter agat, et contra Christum faciat, ad

quod venit, ut mactet utique et disperdat?"—Declam., c. 7. This is conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ: "Qui non intrat per ostium.....ille fur est et latro; fur non venit nisi ut furetur et mactet et perdat."—Joan., x. 1. 10.

16. Some may say, if they only were admitted to orders who have the marks of vocation, which have been laid down as indispensable, there should be but few priests in the Church, and the people should be left without the necessary helps. But to this the Fourth Council of Lateran has answered: "Satius est maxime in ordinatione sacerdotum paucos bonos quam multos malos habere." And St. Thomas says that God never abandons his Church so as to leave her in want of fit ministers to provide for the necessity of the people. "Deus ita nunquam deserit ecclesiam quin inveniantur idonei ministri sufficientes ad necessitatem plebis."—Suppl., q. 36, art. 4, ad 1. St. Leo justly says that to provide for the wants of the people by bad priests, would be not to save but to destroy them: "Non est hoc consulere populis sed nocere."—Ep. 1, alias 87, ad Afric. episc.

17. If, then, a priest has been ordained without a vocation, what must he do? Must he look on himself as lost? must he abandon himself to despair? No. St. Gregory has asked the same question: "Sacerdos sum non vocatus; quid faciendum?" He answers: "Ingemiscendum." Behold what such a priest must do, if he wish to save his soul, *Ingemiscendum:* he must weep, and seek to appease the anger of God by tears and by repentance, and to move him to pardon the great sin which he committed in thrusting himself into the sanctuary without a divine call. He must, as St. Bernard exhorts, endeavour to attain after his ordination the sanctity of life which ought to precede it: "Siquidem vitæ sanctitas non præcesserit, saltem sequatur."—Ep. 27, ad Ardut. He must change his conduct, his conversation and pursuits. "Bonas fac," continues the saint, "de cætero vias tuas, et studia tua."—Ibid. If he is ignorant, he must study: if he has spent his time in worldly conversations and amusements, he must change them

into meditations, spiritual lectures, and visits to the churches. But to do this, he must use violence to himself; for, as has been already said, since he has entered the sanctuary without a vocation, he is but a dislocated member, and therefore he must work out his salvation with great difficulty and great labour. But if in consequence of having become a priest without a divine call, he is, as has been shown, bereft of the helps necessary to enable him to discharge with facility the obligations of the priesthood, how shall he without these helps fulfil the sacerdotal duties? Habert, and the continuator of Tournely, say, let him pray, and by his prayers he shall obtain that assistance which he does not deserve: "Deus tunc ex misericordia ea homini largitur auxilia quæ legitime vocatis ex qualciumque justitia debet." This is conformable to the doctrine of the Council of Trent: "Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo monet et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis; et adjuvat ut possis."—Sess. 6, c. 13.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

SECOND PART.

THE INSTRUCTIONS.

FIRST INTSRUCTION.

On the Celebration of Mass.

1. "Omnis.....pontifex ex hominibus assumptus pro hominibus constituitur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis."—Hebr., v. 1. The priest, then, is placed by God in the Church in order to offer sacrifice. This office is peculiar to the priests of the Law of grace, to whom has been given the power of offering the great sacrifice of the body and blood of the Son of God—a sacrifice sublime and perfect in comparison of the ancient sacrifices, whose entire perfection consisted in being the shadow and figure of our sacrifice. They were sacrifices of calves and oxen, but ours is the sacrifice of the eternal Word made Man. Of themselves they had no efficacy, and were therefore called by St. Paul "infirma et egena elementa."—Gal., iv. 9. But ours has power to obtain the remission of the temporal penalties due to sins, and to procure an augmentation of grace, and more abundant helps for them in whose behalf it is offered. He who has not a just idea of the Mass, shall never offer that holy sacrifice as he ought. Jesus Christ performed no action on earth greater than the celebration of Mass. In a word, of all actions that can be performed, the Mass is the most holy and dear to God; as well on account of the oblation presented to God, that is, Jesus Christ,

a victim of infinite dignity, as on account of the first offerer, Jesus Christ, who offers himself on the altar by the hand of the priest. "Idem nunc offerens," says the Council of Trent, "sacerdotum ministerio qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit."—Sess. 22, cap. 2. St. Chrysostom said: "Cum videris sacerdotem offerentem, non sacerdotem esse putes, sed manum Dei invisibilem extensam."—Hom. 90, ad pop. Ant.

2. All the honours which the angels by their homages, and men by their virtues, penances, and martyrdoms, and other holy works, have ever given to God, could not give him as much glory as a single Mass. For, all the honours of creatures are finite honours, but the honour given to God in the sacrifice of the altar, because it proceeds from a divine person, is an infinite honour. Hence we must confess, that of all actions, the Mass, as the Council of Trent says, is the most holy and divine: "Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse quam hoc tremendum mysterium."—Sess. 22, decr. de observ. in cel. Miss. It is, then, as we have seen, an action the most holy and dear to God—An action which appeases most efficaciously, the anger of God against sinners, which beats down most effectually the powers of hell, which brings to men on earth the greatest benefits, and which affords to the souls in purgatory the greatest relief. It is, in fine, an action in which, as St. Udone, Abbot of Cluni, has written, consists the entire salvation of the world: "Hoc beneficium majus est inter omnia bona quæ hominibus concessa sunt; et hoc est quod Deus majori charitate mortalibus indulsit; quia in hoc mysterio salus mundi tota consistit."—Opusc., lib. 2, cap. 28. And speaking of the Mass, Timothy of Jerusalem said, that by it the world is preserved: "Per quam terrarum orbis consistit."—Orat., de proph. Sim. But for the Mass the earth should have long since perished on account of the sins of men.

3. St. Bonaventure says that in each Mass God bestows on the world a benefit not inferior to that which he conferred by his incarnation: "Non minus

videtur facere Deus in hoc quod quotidie dignatur descendere super altare quam cum naturam humani generis assumpsit."—De instit., p. 1, c. 11. This is conformable to the celebrated words of St. Augustine: "O veneranda sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, veluti in utero virginis, filius Dei incarnatur."—In Ps. 27. Moreover, St. Thomas teaches that since the sacrifice of the altar is nothing else than the application and renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, a single Mass brings to men the same benefits and salvation which were produced by the sacrifice of the cross: "In qualibet Missa invenitur omnis fructus quem Christus operatus est in cruce. Quidquid est affectus dominicæ passionis est effectus hujus sacrificii."—In. c. 6, Is. lect. 6. St. Chrysostom says: "Tantum valet celebratio Missæ quantum valet mors Christi."—Ap. discipul., serm. 48. And of this we are still more assured by the holy Church in the Collect for the Sunday after Pentecost: "Quoties hujus hostiæ commemoratio recolitur, toties opus nostræ redemptionis exercetur."—Orat. Dom., post Pent. The same Redeemer who once offered himself on the cross, is immolated on the altar by the ministry of his priests. "Una enim eademque est hostia," says the Council of Trent, "idem nunc offerens sacerdotis ministerio, qui seipsum in cruce obtulit, sola ratione offerendi diversa."—Trid., sess. 22, c. 3.

4. In a word, the Mass is, according to the prediction of the prophet, "the good and the beautiful thing," of the Church: "Quid enim bonum ejus et quid pulchrum ejus, nisi frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines?"—Zach., ix. 17. In the Mass, Jesus Christ gives himself to us by means of the most holy sacrament of the altar, which is the end and object of all the other sacraments. "Sacramenta in eucharistia consummantur," says the angelic Doctor. Justly, then, has St. Bonaventure called the Mass a compendium of all God's love, and of all his benefits to men: "Et ideo hoc est memoriale totius dilectionis suæ et quasi compendium quoddam omnium beneficiorum suorum."—De instit., p. 1, c. 11. Hence the devil has always sought to deprive the world of the

Mass, by means of the heretics, constituting them precursors of Antichrist, whose first efforts shall be to abolish the holy sacrifice of the altar, and, according to the Prophet Daniel, in punishment of the sins of men, his efforts shall be successful: "Robur autem datum est ei contra juge sacrificium propter peccata."—Dan., viii. 12.

5. Most justly, then, does the holy Council of Trent require of priests to be most careful to celebrate Mass with the greatest possible devotion and purity of conscience: "Satis apparet omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse ut quanta maxima fieri potest interiori cordis munditia (hoc mysterium) per agatur."—Sess. 22, decr. de observ. in cel. Miss. And in the same place the Council justly remarks, that on priests who celebrate this great sacrifice negligently, and without devotion, shall fall the malediction threatened by the Prophet Jeremiah: "Maledictus homo qui facit opus Dei negligenter."—Jer., xlviii. 10. And St. Bonaventure says that he who approaches the altar without reverence and consideration, celebrates or communicates unworthily: "Cave ne minis tepide accedas; quia indigne sumis, si non accedis reverenter et considerate."—De præp. ad Miss., c. 5. In order, then, to avoid this malediction, let us see what the priest must do before Mass, during Mass, and after Mass. Before Mass preparation is necessary, during the celebration of Mass reverence and devotion are necessary, after Mass thanksgiving is necessary. A servant of God used to say that the life of a priest should be nothing else than preparation and thanksgiving for Mass.

6. In the first place, then, the priest must make his preparation before Mass. And before we come to practice, I ask, how does it happen that there are so many priests in the world and so few holy priests? St. Francis de Sales called the Mass a mystery which comprises the entire abyss of divine love. (Philot., p. 2, c. 14.) St. John Chrysostom used to say that the most holy sacrament of the altar is the treasure of all God's benignity: "Dicendo eucharistiam omnem benignitatis Dei thesaurum aperio." There is

no doubt but the holy eucharist has been instituted for all the faithful, but it is a gift bestowed in a special manner on priests. "Nolite," says our Lord, addressing priests, "dare sanctum canibus, neque ponatis margaritas vestras ante porcos."—Mat., vii. 6. Mark the word *margaritas vestras.* In the Greek the consecrated particles are called *pearls;* but these pearls are called, as it were, the property of priests: *margaritas vestras.* Hence, as St. Chrysostom says, every priest should leave the altar all inflamed with divine love, so as to strike terror into the powers of hell: "Tanquam leones igitur ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus, facti diabolo terribiles."—Hom. 6, ad pop. ant. But this is not the case. The greater number depart from the altar, always more tepid, more impatient, proud, jealous, and more attached to self-esteem, to self-interest, and to earthly pleasures. "Defectus non est in cibo, sed in sumente," says Cardinal Bona. The defect does not arisa from the food which they take on the altar; for, as St. Mary Magdelen de Pazzi used to say, that food taken once, would be sufficient to make them saints, but it arises from the little preparation which they make for the celebration of Mass. Preparation for Mass is twofold: remote and proximate. The remote preparation consists in the pure and virtues life which a priest should lead in order to celebrate worthily. If God required purity in the priests of the Old Law, because they had to carry the sacred vessels (mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini.—Isa., lii. 11.) how much greater should be the purity and sanctity of the priest who has to carry in his hands and in his body the Incarnate Word. "Quanto mundiores," says Peter de Blois, "esse oportet qui in manibus et in corpore portant Christum."—Ep. 123. But to be pure and holy, it is not enough for the priest to be exempt from mortal sins, he must be also free from venial sins which are fully deliberate; otherwise he shall have no part with Jesus Christ. "Nemo," says St. Bernard, "quæ videntur modica contemnat; quoniam sicut audivit Petrus, nisi laverit ea Christus, non habebimus partem cum eo." Hence all the

actions and words of the priest who wishes to celebrate Mass, must be holy, and serve to prepare him for the worthy celebration of the sacred mysteries.

7. For the immediate preparation, mental prayer is, in the first place, necessary. How can the priest celebrate Mass with devotion without having first made mental prayer? Father M. Avila used to say that a priest should make mental prayer for an hour or, at least, half an hour, before Mass. I would be content with half an hour, or, and for some, with even a quarter of an hour: but a quarter is too little. There are so many beautiful books containing meditations preparatory to Mass, but who makes use of them? It is through neglect of meditation, that we see so many Masses said without devotion and with irreverence. The Mass is a representation of the passion of Jesus Christ. Hence Pope Alexander I., justly said, that in the Mass we should always commemorate the passion of our Lord: "Inter Missarum solemnia semper passio Domini miscenda est, ut ejus cujus et corpus et sanguis conficitur, passio celebretur."—Epist. 1. And before him, the apostle said: Quotiescumque.....manducabitis panem hunc et calicem bibetus, mortem Domini annuntiabitis."—1 Cor. xi. 26. According to St. Thomas, the Redeemer has instituted the most holy sacrament that we might always have a lively remembrance of the love which he has shown us, and of the great benefits which he obtained for us by offering himself in sacrifice on the cross. But if all should continually remember the passion of Jesus Christ, how much more should the priest reflect on it when he goes to renew on the altar, though in a different manner, the same sacrifice which the Son of God offered on the cross?

8. Moreover, even though he had made his meditation, the priest should before he begins Mass, always recollect himself at least for a short time, and consider what he is going to do? The Council of Milan, in the time of St. Charles, ordained that all priests should do so: "Antequam celebrent, se colligant et orantes mentem in tanti mysterii cogitationem defigant." In entering the sacristy to celebrate Mass,

the priest should take leave of all worldly thoughts, and say with St. Bernard, "Curæ, sollicitudines, servitutes, expectate me hic donec, illuc cum ratione et intelligentia mea properantes, postquam adoraverimus, revertamur ad vos; revertemur enim et quam cito revertemur."—De amore Dei. In a letter to St. Jane Chantal, St. Francis de Sales said: When I turn to the altar to begin Mass, I lose sight of every thing on this earth. Hence, during the celebration of Mass, the priest should take leave of all worldly thoughts, and should think only of the great action which he is going to perform, and of the heavenly bread he is going to eat at the divine table. "Quando sederis," says Solomon, "ut comedas cum principe, diligenter attende quæ posita sunt ante faciem tuam."—Prov. xxiii. 1. Let him consider that he is going to call from heaven to earth, the Incarnate Word; to treat with him familiarly on the altar; to offer him again to the eternal Father; and finally to partake of his sacred flesh. In preparing to celebrate, Father John d'Avila would endeavour to excite his fervour by saying: I am now going to consecrate the Son of God, to hold him in my hands, to converse and treat with him, and to receive him into my heart.

9, The priest should also consider that he ascends the altar to perform the office of intercessor for all sinners: "Sacerdos dum celebrat," says St. Laurence Justinian, "mediatoris gerit officium; propterea delinquentium debet esse precator."—Serm. de corp. Christi. Thus the priest on the altar stands between God and men, presents their petitions, and obtains for them the divine graces: "Medius fit sacerdos," says St. Chrysostom, "inter Deum et naturam humanam; illinc beneficia ad nos deferens."—Hom. 6, in 2 Tim., ii. It is for this reason, says St. Thomas, that the sacrifice of the altar is called the Mass: "Propter hoc Missa nominatur quia sacerdos per angelum preces ad Deum mittit, et populus ad sacerdotem."—3 p., qu. 88, art. 4 ad 9. In the Old Law the priest was permitted to enter *the holy of holies*, only once in the year; but now every priest is allowed to immolate every day the Lamb of God, in order to

obtain the divine graces for himself and the entire people. "Ipsis profecto sacerdotibus licet," says St. Laurence Justinian, "non tantum semel in anno, ut olim, sed diebus singulis introire sancta sanctorum et tam pro seipsis quam pro populi reconciliatione offerre hostiam."—De instit. prælat., cap. 10, n. 6. Hence, according to St. Bonaventure, in going to celebrate, a priest should propose to himself three ends: to honour God, to commemorate the passion of Jesus Christ, and to obtain graces for the whole Church: "Tria sunt quæ celebraturus intendere debet, scilicet Deum colere, Christi mortem memorari et totam ecclesiam juvare."—De præp. ad Missa, c. 9.

10. Secondly, it is necessary to celebrate Mass with reverence and devotion. It is well known that the maniple was introduced for the purpose of wiping away the tears of devotion which flowed from the eyes of the priest; for in former times priests wept continually during the celebration of Mass. It has been already said that a priest on the altar represents the very person of Jesus Christ. "Sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur," says St. Cyprian, epist 63, ad Cecil. There he says in the person of Jesus Christ, *hoc est corpus meum: hic est calix sanguinis mei.* But, O God, it would be necessary to weep, and even to shed tears of blood, at the manner in which many priests celebrate Mass. It excites compassion to see the contempt with which some priests and religious, and even priests of the reformed orders, treat Jesus Christ on the altar. Observe with what kind of attention certain priests celebrate Mass. I hope their number is small. Of them we may well say what Clement of Alexandria said of the pagan priests, that they turned heaven into a stage, and God into the subject of the comedy: "O impietatem! scenam cœlum fecistis, et Deus factus est actus."—De sacr. Gentil. But why do I say a comedy? Oh! how great would be their attention if they had to recite a part in a comedy? But with what sort of attention do they celebrate Mass? Mutilated words; genuflexions which appear to be acts

of contempt, rather than of reverence; benedictions which I know not what to call. They move and turn on the altar is a disrespectful manner; they confound the words with the ceremonies which they perform before the time prescribed by the rubrics; although these rubrics are, according to the true opinion, all preceptive. For, St. Pius V, in the bull inserted in the missal, commands us (districte in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ,) to celebrate Mass according to the rubrics of the missal: "Juxta ritum, modum et norman in missali præscriptam." Hence he who violates the rubrics, cannot be excused from sin, and he who is guilty of a grievous neglect of them, cannot be excused from mortal sin. All arises from an anxiety to have the Mass soon finished. Some say Mass with as much haste as if the walls were about to fall, or as if they expected to be attacked by pirates without getting time to fly away. Some priests spend two hours in useless conversation, or in treating of worldly affairs, and are all haste in celebrating Mass. As they begin the Mass without reverence, so they proceed to consecrate, to take Jesus Christ in their hands, and to communicate with as much irreverence as if the holy sacrament were common bread. They should be told what Father M. Avila said one day to a priest who celebrated with haste and irreverence: "For God's sake treat him better, for he is the Son of a good Father." The Lord commanded the priests of the Old Law to tremble through reverence in approaching his sanctuary: "Pavete ad sanctuarium meum."—Lev., xxvi. ii. And still we see scandalous irreverence in priests of the New Law while they stand on the altar in the presence of Jesus Christ; while they converse with him, take him in their hands, offer him in sacrifice, and eat his flesh. In the Old Law, the Lord threatened several maledictions against priests who neglected the ceremonies of sacrifices, which were but figures of our sacrifice. "But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep.....all his ceremonies.....all these curses shall come upon thee.....cursed shall thou be in the city, cursed in the field." Deut., xxviii. 15, 16. St.

Teresa used to say: I would give my life for a ceremony of the Church. And will a priest despise the ceremonies of the holy Mass: Suares teaches that the omission of any ceremony prescribed in the Mass, cannot be excused from sin; and it is the opinion of many theologians, that a notable neglect of the ceremonies may be a mortal sin.

11. In my moral theology, (lib. 6, n. 400, q. 2.) I have shown by the authority of many theologians, that to celebrate Mass in less than an quarter of an hour, cannot be excused from grievous sin. This doctrine rests on two reasons: first, the irreverence which in so short a Mass is offered to the holy sacrifice; secondly, the scandal which is given to the people. As to the reverence due to the sacrifice, we have adduced the words of the Council of Trent, commanding priests to celebrate Mass with the greatest possible devotion: "Omnem operam ponendam esse ut quanta maxima fieri potest exterioris devotionis ac pietatis specie peragatur."—Sess. 22, decr. de observ., &c. The Council adds, that to neglect even this external devotion due to the sacrifice, is a species of impiety: "Irreverentia, quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest." As the due performance of the ceremonies constitutes reverence, so to perform them badly is an irreverence which when grievous, is a mortal sin. And to perform the ceremonies with the reverence due to so a great a sacrifice, it is not enough to go through them; for some who are very quick in their articulation and motions, may be able to perform the ceremonies in less than a quarter of an hour, but it is necessary to perform them with becoming gravity, which belongs intrinsically to the reverence due to the Mass.

12. To celebrate Mass in so short a time, is also a grievous sin on account of the scandal given to the people who are present. And here it is necessary to consider what the same Council of Trent says in another place, that the ceremonies have been instituted by the Church in order to excite in the faithful the veneration and esteem due to so great a sacrifice, and to the most sublime mysteries which it contains.

"Ecclesia," says the holy Council, "cæremonias adhibuit ut majestas tanti sacrificii commendaretur, et mentes fidelium per hæc visibilia religionis signa ad rerum altissimarum, quæ in hoc sacrificio latent, contemplationem excitarentur."—Sess. 22, c. 5, de ref. But instead of inspiring reverence, these ceremonies when performed with great haste, diminish and destroy the veneration of the people for so holy a mystery. Peter de Blois says that the irreverence with which Mass is celebrated, makes people think little of the most holy sacrament: "Ex inordinatis et indisciplinatis sacerdotibus hodie datur ostentui nostræ redemptionis venerabile sacramentum."—Ep. ad Richer. This caudal cannot be excused from mortal sin. Hence in the year 1583, the Council of Tours ordained that priests should be well instructed in the ceremonies of the Mass: "Ne populum sibi commissum a devotione potius revocent quam ad saororum mysteriorum venerationem invitent."

13. How can priests expect by Masses said with such irreverence to obtain graces from God, when during the oblation of these Masses they offend and dishonour him more than they honour him? Should a priest not believe in the most holy sacrament of the altar, he would offend God, but it is a still greater offence to believe in it, and to celebrate Mass without due reverence, and thus make the people who are present lose their veneration for the holy sacrament. In the beginning the Jews respected Jesus Christ, but when they saw him despised by their priests, they lost their esteem for him, and in the end joined in the cry of the priests: "Tolle, tolle, crucifige eum." And in like manner, seculars seeing a priest treat the Mass with such irreverence, lose their respect and veneration for it. A Mass said with reverence excites devotion in all who assist at it; but, on the other hand, a Mass celebrated with irreverence, destroys devotion and even faith in those who are present. A religious of high reputation told me that a certain heretic was resolved to renounce his errors, but having been afterwards present at a Mass said without reverence, he went to the bishop and said that he no longer intended to abjure

his heresy, because he felt convinced that priests who celebrated Mass in such a manner, did not sincerely believe in the truth of the Catholic Church; and added, "If I were pope and knew that a priest said Mass with irreverence, I would command him to be burned alive." After these words he withdrew, resolved to continue in his heresy. But some priests say that seculars complain when the Mass is long. Then I ask shall the want of devotion in seculars be the rule for the respect due to the Mass? Besides, if all priests said Mass with becoming reverence and gravity, seculars would feel the veneration due to so great a sacrifice, and would not complain of being obliged to spend half an hour in assisting at Mass. But because Masses are frequently so short, and so little calculated to excite devotion, seculars, after the example of priests, assist at Mass with indevotion and with little faith; and when they find that it lasts longer than half an hour, they, on account of the bad habit which they have contracted, grow weary and begin to complain; and though they spend without tediousness several hours at play, or in the street, to pass the time, they feel it tedious and fatiguing to spend half an hour in hearing Mass. Of this evil, priests are the cause. "To you, O priests, that despise my name, and have said: wherein have we despised thy name?.....In that you say: the table of the Lord is contemptible." Malach., i. 6, 7. The want of reverence with which many priests celebrate Mass, is the cause of its being treated with contempt by others.

14. Poor priests! Having heard that a priest died after celebrating his first Mass, the venerable Father M. Avila said: Oh! what a terrible account shall he have to render to God for his first Mass? But what should Father Avila say of priests who have for thirty or forty years said Mass with haste and irreverence, so as to scandalize all who assisted at it? And how, I ask again, can such priests propitiate the Lord and obtain his graces, when by celebrating in such a manner, they insult rather than honour him? "Cum omne crimen," said Pope Julius, "sacrificiis deleatur, quid pro delictorum expiatione Domino dabitur,

quando in ipsa sacrificii oblatione erratur?"—C. 1, cum omne crimen, de consecr., dist. 2. Miserable priests! and miserable the bishop who permits such priests to celebrate. For, as the Council of Trent prescribes, bishops are bound to prevent all irreverences in the celebration of Mass: "Decernit sancta synodus, ut ordinarii locorum ea omnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur quæ irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit."—Sess. 22, dec. de observ., &c., Mark the words, *prohibere curent ac teneantur;* they are bound to suspend the priest who celebrates without due reverence. And this they are obliged to do even with regard to regulars; for in this every bishop is constituted a delegate of the Apostolic See, and is therefore bound to seek for information regarding the manner in which Mass is celebrated in his diocess.

15. And let us, dearly beloved priests, endeavour to amend, if we have hitherto offered this great sacrifice with a want of reverence and devotion. Let us, at least from this day forward, repair the evil we have done. Let us, in preparing for mass, reflect on the nature of the action we are going to perform: in celebrating mass we perform an action the most sublime and holy that man can perform. Ah! what blessings does a mass, said with devotion, bring on him who offers it, and on those who hear it. With regard to the priest who offers it, the *disciple* writes: "Oratio citius auditur in ecclesia in præsentia celebrantis."—Serm. 48. Now, if God hears, more speedily, the prayers which a secular offers in the presence of a priest celebrating mass, how much more readily will he hear the prayers of the priest himself, if he celebrates with devotion! He who offers the holy mass every day with devotion, shall always receive new lights and new strength from God. Jesus Christ will always infuse increased knowledge and consolation; he will encourage him, and grant him the graces which he desires. A priest may feel assured, particulary after the consecration, that he shall receive from Jesus Christ, all the graces he asks. The venerable Father D. Anthony de Colellis, of the

congregation of the *Pii Operarii*, used to say: "When I celebrate and hold Jesus Christ in my hands, I obtain whatsoever I wish for." With regard to him who celebrates, and to those who hear mass, it is related, in the life of St. Peter of Alcantara, that the mass which he so devoutly celebrated, produced more fruit than all the sermons preached in the province in which he lived. The Council of Rhodes commanded priests to show their faith and devotion towards Jesus Christ, by pronouncing the words with piety, and performing the ceremonies with reverence and devotion towards Jesus Christ, who is present in the mass: "Actio et pronunciatio ostendat fidem et intentionem quam (sacerdos) habere debet de Christi et angelorum in sacrificio præsentia."—De sacr. miss. n. 4. The external deportment, says St. Bonaventure, is what shows the interior dispositions of the celebrant: "Intrinsecos motus gestus exterior attestatur. And here let us call to mind in passing, the command of Innocent the Third: "Præcipimus quoque ut oratoria, vasa corporalia et vestimenta nitida conserventur: nimis enim videtur absurdum in sacris negligere quæ dedecent in profanis."—In can. 1. Relinqui, tit. 44. Oh God! the pontiff has too much reason to speak in this manner: for some priests have no repugnance to celebrate with corporals, purificatories and chalices which they could not bear to use at table.

16. In the third place, after Mass, thanksgiving is necessary. The thanksgiving should terminate only with the day. St. Chrysostom says, that for every trifling favour which they confer upon us, men expect that we will show our gratitude by making some return. How much more grateful should we be to God who expects no recompense for his gifts, but wishes us to thank him, solely for our welfare! "Si homines parvum beneficium præstiterint, expectant nobis gratitudinem: quanto magis id nobis faciendum in iis quæ a Deo accepimus, qui hoc solum ob nostram utilitatem vult fieri."—Hom. 26, in cap. 8, Gen. If, continues the saint, we are not able to thank the Lord as much as he deserves, let us, at least, thank him as much as we can. But what a misery to see so

many priests who, after Mass, say a few short prayers in the sacristy, without attention or devotion, and then begin to speak on useless subjects, or on worldly business, or perhaps leave the church immediately after Mass, and carry Jesus Christ into the street. They should be treated in the manner in which Father Avila once acted towards a priest who left the church immediately after celebrating Mass. He sent two ecclesiastics with lighted torches to accompany him; when asked by the priest why they followed him, they answered: "We accompany the most holy sacrament which you carry in your breast." To such priests we may well apply the words of St. Bernard to the Archdeacon Fulcone. "Heu! quomodo Christum tam cito fastidis?"—Epist. 25. Oh God! how can you become, so soon, weary of the company of Jesus Christ who is within you?

17. So many books of devotion exhort thanksgiving after Mass; but how many priests make it? It is easy to point to those who practice it. Some make mental prayer, recite many vocal prayers, but spend little or no time with Jesus Christ after Mass. They might, at least, continue in prayer as long as the consecrated species remain within their breast. Father John Avila used to say that we ought to set great value on the time after Mass; he ordinarily spent two hours in recollection with God after celebrating Mass. After communion the Lord dispenses his graces most abundantly. St. Teresa said that then Jesus Christ remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to her: "Quid vis ut tibi faciam?" Besides, it is necessary to know that, according to the opinion of Saures, Gonet, and many other theologians, the more the soul disposes herself by good acts, while the consecrated species remain, the greater the fruit she derives from the holy communion. For, as the Council of Florence teaches, this sacrament has been instituted in the form of food, and therefore as the longer earthly food remains in the stomach the more nutriment it gives to the body, so the longer this heavenly food continues in the body, the more it nourishes the soul with grace, provided there be corresponding

dispositions in the communicant. This increase of grace is the more confidently to be expected, because during that time every good act has greater value and merit: for the soul is then united with Jesus Christ, as he himself has said: "Qui manducat meam carnem, in me manet et ego in eo." And, according to St. Chrysostom, the soul is then made one thing with Jesus Christ: "Ipsa re nos suum efficit corpus." Hence, good acts are then more meritorious, because they are performed by the soul while she is united with Jesus Christ. But on the other hand St. Bernard tells us, that the Lord will not lose his graces by giving them to the ungrateful: "Nunquid non perit quod donatur ingratis?"—Ser. 5, in Cant. Let us then remain, at least for half-an-hour, with Jesus Christ after Mass; at least for a quarter. But, Oh! God, a quarter of an hour is too little. We should remember, that from the day of his ordination, the priest belongs no longer to himself, but to God: "Verus minister altaris," says St. Ambrose, "Deo, non sibi natus est." And before him, God himself said the same: "Incensum... ...Domini et panem Dei sui offerunt: et ideo sancti erunt."—Levit. xxi. 6.

18. Some abstain through humility, from the celebration of Mass. A word on this subject. To abstain from saying Mass through humility, is a good act, but it is not the most perfect; acts of humility give God a finite honour, but the Mass gives him infinite honour, because this honour is offered by a divine person. Attend to the words of venerable Bede: "Sacerdos non legitime impeditus, celebrare omittens, quantum in eo est, privat SS. Trinitatem gloria, angelos lætitia, peccatores venia, justos subsidio, in purgatorio existentes refrigerio, ecclesiam beneficio et seipsum medicina."—De Miss. Sacrif. St. Cajetan, while in Naples, heard that a cardinal, and a particular friend in Rome, who was accustomed to say Mass every day, had begun to omit it on account of his occupations. The saint resolved to go, and actually went to Rome, in the burning heat of summer, at the risk of his life, in order to persuade his friend to resume his former custom. The venerable John d'Avila, as we read in

his life, (s. 16,) going one day to say Mass in a hermitage, felt himself so feeble that he began to despair of being able to reach the place, which was at a distance, and intended to omit Mass; but Jesus Christ appeared to him in the form of a pilgrim, uncovered his breast, showed him his wounds, and particularly the wound in his side, and said to him: "When I was wounded, I felt more fatigued and feeble than you are." He then disappeared: Father Avila took courage, went to the oratory, and celebrated Mass.

SECOND INSTRUCTION.

On the good example which a Priest ought to give.

1. Jesus Christ has instituted two orders in his church: one, of the simple faithful; the other, of ecclesiastics: but with this difference, that the former are disciples and sheep, the latter are masters and shepherds. To the laity St. Paul says: "Obedite præpositis vestris et subjacete eis: ipsi enim pervigilant, quasi rationem pro animabus vestris reddituri." Heb. xiii. 17. And to ecclesiastics, St. Peter has said: "Pascite qui in vobis est gregem Dei."—1 Pet. v. 2. And in another place we read: "Attendite vobis et universo gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopos regere ecclesiam Dei."—Act. xx. 28. Hence St. Augustine has well said: that "there is nothing more difficult, nothing more dangerous than the office of a priest."—Epis. 22, alias 148. The difficulty and danger of the office of a priest arise precisely from his obligation to lead a holy life, not only by interior, but also by exterior sanctity, that others may learn from him, holiness of life. "Bonus si fuerit," writes the same saint, "qui tibi præest, nutritor tibi est, malus si fuerit, tentator tui est."—De verbo Dom. serm. 6, cap. 7. The Scripture says that, in Jerusalem, the people lived in holiness, "because of the godliness of Onias the high priest."—2 Mac. iii. 1. And,

according to the Council of Trent; "Integritas præsidentium salus est subditorum."—Sess. 6, cap. 1. But, on the other hand, how great the havoc, how strong the temptations caused by the bad example of a priest! "My people," says the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias, "hath been a lost flock, their shepherds have caused them to go astray."—Jer. 1. 6. "Nullum majus præjudicium," writes St. Gregory, "tolerat Deus quam a sacerdotibus, quos, cum posuit ad aliorum salutem, cernit dare exempla pravitatis."—Hom. 17, in Luc. 10. St. Bernard says, "that seculars, seeing the sinful life of the priest, think no more of amending their conduct, but begin to despise the sacraments, and the rewards and punishments of the next life." "Very many," writes the holy Doctor, "beholding the wicked life of an ecclesiastic, indulge in vices, despise the sacraments, feal no horror of hell, nor the smallest desire of heavenly things."—De. 12, pœn. imped. Serm. 19. For, like the man of whom St. Augustine writes, they say: "Why do you correct me? Do not ecclesiastics do what I do? And do you compel me to abstain from it?"—Serm. 99. Our Lord said to St. Bridget: "At the sight of the bad example of the priest, the sinner assumes confidence in sinning, and begins to boast of sins which he before regarded as shameful."—Rev. lib. iv. c. 3. "Sacerdotes," says St. Gregory, "bases in templo."—Hom. in Ev. When the foundations give way the whole edifice falls. Hence, in the ordination of, priests, the holy Church prays for them in the following words: "Justitiam, constantiam, misericordiam cæterasque virtutes in se ostendant, exemplo præeant." Priest ought not only to be holy, but they should also show forth sanctity in their lives: for, says St. Augustine, as a good conscience is necessary for a priest to save his own soul, so he requires a good reputation in order to save his neighbour, otherwise, though he might be merciful and attentive to himself, he would be cruel towards others, and thus should bring himself and them to perdition: "Conscientia necessaria est tibi, fama proximo tuo: qui fidens conscientiæ suæ negligit famam suam, crudelis est."—In quæst. 12.

God has selected priests from among men, not only that they may offer sacrifices, but also, that by the good odour of their virtues, they may edify the rest of the Church. "He chose him out of all men living, to offer sacrifice to God, incense, and a good savour."—Eccl. xlv. 20.

3. Priests are the salt of the earth: "Vos estis sal terræ."—Mat. v. 13. "Then," says the Gloss, "priests should give a savour to others, and render them grateful to God, instructing them in the practice of virtue, not only by preaching, but still more by the example of a holy life: "Sal condientes alios doctrina et vitæ exemplo." Priests are also the light of the world: "Vos estis lux mundi."—Mat. v. 14. The priest, then, as our divine Master proceeds to say, should shine refulgent among the people, by the splendour of his virtues, and thus give glory to that God who has conferred on him an honour so singular and sublime. "So," said the Redeemer, "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—Mat. v. 16. Of this obligation, St. Jerome reminds priests. "Therefore," says the saint, "has God chosen us that we may be luminaries."—Hom. 10, in. 1, ad Tim. Pope Nicholas has written the same, saying that priests are the stars which enlighten the people on every side. "They are," said the Pontiff, according to the words of Daniel, "*they that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity*," (Dan. xii. 3.) "stars shedding light on their neighbours, far and wide." But, to be a luminary, it is not enough for the priest to enlighten by his words, he must also give light by his good example. For the life of a priest, as St. Charles Borromeo used to say, "is precisely the beacon on which seculars, navigating in the midst of the ocean and darkness of the world, keep their eyes fixed in order to escape destruction." And before him, St. Chrysostom said, "the priest ought to lead a life of order, that all may look to him as to an excellent model; for God has chosen us, that we might be, as it were, luminaries and teachers to others."—Hom. 20, in Ep. 1, ad Tim. The life of the

priest is the light which is placed on the candlestick to give light to all. "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house."—Mat. v. 15. Hence the Council of Bordeaux said: "Clerici vita omnium oculis sic exposita est ut inde bene vel male vivendi exempla ducantur."—An. 1583, c. 21. The priest, then, is the light of the world; but if the light be changed into darkness, what must become of the world?

4. Priests are also, as St. Jerome calls them, "the *Fathers of Christians:* Patres Christianorum." If then, adds St. Chrysostom, "priests are the fathers of all, it is their duty to attend to all their spiritual children, edifying them first by a holy life, and afterwards by salutary instructions: Quasi totius orbis pater sacerdos est, dignum igitur est ut omnium curam agat."—Hom. 6, in Epis. 1, ad Tim. If he give bad example, his spiritual children will imitate him. "What," says Peter de Blois, "will a layman do but what he has seen done by his spiritual father."—Serm. 57, ad Sacerd. Priests are, also, the teachers and models of virtue. Our Saviour said to his disciples: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."—John xx. 21. As the eternal Father, then, sent Jesus Christ into the world, to be a model for imitation, so Jesus Christ has placed priests in the world, to be patterns of all virtues. This, the very words *sacerdos* and *presbyter* signify. "Sacerdos," says Peter de Blois, "dicitur quasi sacrum dans: dat enim sacrum de Deo, idest prædicationem: dat sacrum Dei, idest sacramenta, dat sacrum pro Deo, idest exemplum."—Serm. in Syn. Another author says, that the word *presbyter* signifies "one who shows to the people (*by word and example,*) the way from exile to the kingdom of heaven."—Honor. Augustodun. in Jos. iii. 6. This, the apostle has taught: 'In all things show thyself an example.....that he who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of us."—Tit. ii. 7-8. St. Peter Damian says, that the Lord has separated priests from the laity, that they may observe a rule of life different

from that which the people follow: "Ut quid enim a populo (sacerdotes) segregantur, nisi ut divisam a populo vivendi regulam teneant?"—Ep. 5, cap. 2. And from this rule seculars learn to lead a life of virtue. Hence, St. Peter Chrysologus calls the priest "*the form of virtues: forma virtutum.*" And, addressing a priest, St. Chrysostom has said: "let the splendour of your life be the common school and model of virtues."—Hom. 4, in Ep. 2, ad Tit. This, as St. Bernard writes, the sacerdotal ministry itself demands: "Cathedram sanctitatis exigit ministerium hoc."

5. In order to see the people sanctified, David prayed to the Lord in the following words: "Let thy priests be clothed with justice, and let thy saints rejoice."—Ps. 131, 9. To be clothed with justice, the priest must give an example of every virtue, of zeal, of humility, of charity, of modesty, &c. In a word, St. Paul says, that we, priests, should, by holiness of life, show ourselves to be true ministers of the God of holiness. "But in all things, let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God.....in chastity, in knowledge, in long suffering," æc.—2 Cor. vi. 4. And before him, Jesus Christ taught the same: "If any man minister to me, let him follow me."—John xii. 26. Hence priests should copy in their life, the example of Jesus Christ, so that, as St. Ambrose says, they may give such edification that every one who beholds them may bear testimony to their sanctity, and venerate that God who has such ministers: "Decet actuum nostrorum testem esse publican æstimationem, ut qui viderit ministrum, Dominum veneretur, qui tales servos habeat. Hence, Minutius Felix writes, that we, priests, should make ourselves known as priests, not by splendour of dress, nor by ornaments of the head, but by modesty, and innocence of life: "Non notaculo corporis, sed innocentiæ et modestiæ signo dignoscimur."—In suo octavio. Priests are placed in the world to wash away the stains of others. Hence, says St. Gregory, they must be holy, and appear holy: "Oportet ut munda sit manus quæ diluere aliorum sordes curat."—Pastor. p. 1, cap. 9.

6. The priest is the leader of the people. "Sacerdos," says St. Peter Damian, "dux exercitus Domini."—De dig sac. But, according to St. Denis, no one should dare to become a guide to others in what relates to God, unless he himself be made in all things like to God: "Sic in divino omni non est audendum aliis ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus, et Deo simillimus."—Apud. S. Thom. suppl. q. 36, a. 1. And Philip the Abbot, said: "The life of ecclesiastics is the form of the laity; the former should go before as leaders, and the latter follow as flocks."—De dign. cler. cap. 2. St. Augustine calls priests, the *rulers of the earth*: "*Rectores terræ.*"—Ser. 36, ad fr. cr. He, then, who is placed over others for their correction, must be irreprehensible: "Irreprehensibiles esse convenit," says Pope Hormisdas, "quos præesse necesse est corrigendis." And according to the Council of Pisa, "as ecclesiastics enjoy an exalted dignity, so they ought to shine with the light of virtues, and profess a kind of life which may excite others to sanctity." For, as St. Leo has written, "Integritas præsidentium salus est subditorum."

7. St. Gregory of Nyssa, calls the priest a teacher of sanctity: "*Doctor pietatis.*" But if the master exhibit pride, how can he teach humility? If he be vindictive, how can he inculcate meekness? "He," says St. Isidore, "who is appointed to instruct the people, must be holy in all things." And if our Lord has said to all: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly father is perfect," (Mat. v. 48,) how much more, says Salvian, will he demand perfection from priests, who are to teach all the people? "Si viris in plebe positis tam perfectam Deus vivendi regulam dedit, quantum esse illos perfectos jubeat a quibus omnes docendi sunt ut possint esse perfecti?"—Lib. 2, ad eccl. cath. How can he inflame others with the love of God, unless he shows by his works that his own heart burns with that holy fire? "He," says Gregory, "who does not burn, does not inflame?" and St. Bernard writes, that to him who loves not, the language of love is a strange and bar-

barous tongue: "Barbara lingua amoris et qui non amat." Hence, St. Thomas agrees with St. Gregory, that the priest who does not give good example, will bring contempt on his preaching, and on all his spiritual functions: "Cujus vita despicitur, restat ut ejus prædicatio contemnatur, et omnia spiritualia ab eo exhibita." Supp. qu. 36, art. 4.

8. The Council of Trent ordains, that they only are to be admitted to the priesthood who are "ita pietate ac castis moribus conspicui ut præclarum bonorum operum exemplum et vitæ monita ab eis possint expectari."—Sess. 23. c. 14, de ref. But observe, that good example should be first expected, and afterwards salutary instructions; the Council calls good example a perpetual kind of preaching: "Est perpetuum prædicandi genus." Priests, then, should preach, first by example, and afterwards by words. "Quorum vita," says St. Augustine, "aliorum debet esse prædicatio." Serm. 249, de Temp. And St. Chrysostom writes: "Bona exempla voces edunt omni tuba clariores..... Neque enim considerantur quæ dicuntur quam quæ a nobis agantur."—Hom. 15, in Mat. Hence St. Jerome said to Nepotianus: "Let not works confound your preaching, lest when you speak in the church every one should tacitly answer—why, then, do you yourself not practise what you preach?"—Ep. 34, ad Nepot. St. Bernard has written: "Dabis voci tuæ vocem virtutis, si quod suades, prius tibi cognosceris persuasisse: validior operis quam oris vox."—Serm. 59, in Cant. To persuade others, the preacher must show that he himself is convinced of the truth of his doctrine; but how can he evince such a conviction when his conduct is in opposition to his preaching? "He," says the author of the *Imperfect Work*, "who neglects to practise what he teaches, teaches not others, but condemns himself."—Hom. in Mat. The sermon, says St. Gregory, which is commended by the life of the preacher, persuades and moves: "Illa vox auditorem penetrat quam dicentis vita commendat."—Pastor. c. 1, p. 1, 3. Men believe the eyes sooner than the ears, that is, they are convinced more easily by the examples which they see,

than by the words which they hear. "Since," says the Council of Urcellens, "men believe the eyes rather than the ears, it is necessary for a priest to give good example, as well in dress, and in all his actions."—Tract. 3, c. 4.

9. Priests are, as the Council of Trent says, the mirrors of the world, in which all look at themselves, and from which the take examples for the regulation of their life: "In eos tanquam in speculum, reliqui omnes oculos conjiciunt, ex iisque sumunt quod imitentur."—Sess. 22. c. 1, de ref. And long before the holy Council, St. Gregory said the same: "Decet sacerdos moribus clarescere, quatenus in eo tanquam speculo plebs et eligere quod sequatur et videre possit quod corrigat."—In Reg. c. 7, Ep. 32, dist. 1. And the apostle writes: "We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men."—1 Cor. iv. 9. Everything belonging to the priest demands sanctity. "Clamat vestis clericalis," says St. Jorome, "clamat status, clamat professi animi sanctitatem."—Ep. 58. According to St. Eucherius, priests bear the weight of the whole world, that is, they are bound by their obligations, to save all souls. But how are they to save them? By the power of their sanctity, and holy example, "Hi onus totius orbis portant humeris sanctitatis."—S. Euch. Hom. 3. Hence, the Council of Valentia said: "Sacerdos de religione sua in habitus, vultus, et sermonis gravitate talem se exhibere studeat ut se formam disciplinæ et modestiæ infundat."—Can. 15. The priest should then, in the first place, exhibit gravity in his dress: but can priests give an example of modesty, if, instead of wearing the clerical costume, they display vanity and extravagance in their apparel? Secondly, the priest should exhibit gravity in his countenance: in order to set an example of modesty, he must keep his eyes cast down, not only when he is on the altar, and in the church, but also in all places in which there are females. Thirdly, to exhibit gravity in his words, he must carefully abstain from uttering certain worldly maxims, and certain jests which are contrary to modesty. The fourth Council of Carthage ordained,

that the ecclesiastic who indulges in immodest jests, should be suspended from his office: "Clericus verbis turpibus jocularis ab officio removendus."—Cap. 6. But you may ask, what harm is there in such jests? "Words," says St. Bernard, which are jests among seculars, are, in the mouth of a priest, blasphemies which excite horror: "Nugæ inter seculares nugæ sunt, in ore sacerdotis blasphemiæ." The saint adds: "Consecrasti os tuum evangelio: talibus aperire illicitum, assuescere sacrilegium."—Lib. 2, de Cons. c. 13. St. Jerome writes: "Omne quod non ædificat audientes, in periculum vertitur loquentium." Some things, which are trifling in seculars, are criminal in a priest; for every bad example by which he leads others into sin, is in him a grievous transgression. "Quod veniale est plebi," says Peter de Blois, "criminale est sacerdoti: quia quod erroneum est, peremptorium est pastori."—In Ps. 2, v. 10.

10. St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "Splendidæ vestis manifestiores sunt maculæ." In a splendid garment, stains are most conspicious, and produce great deformity. It is also necessary for the priest to abstain from every species of detraction. St. Jerome says, that some renounce other vices, but they appear to think it impossible to give up the sin of detraction: "Qui ab aliis vitiis recesserunt, in istud tamen quasi in extremum laqueum incidunt."—Ap. Abelly. p. 4, c. 9. It is also necessary to avoid familiar intercourse with seculars. The conversations of seculars breathe an infectious air, which, as St. Basil says, gradually destroys the health of the soul: "Sicut in pestilentibus locis sensim attractus aer morbum injicit, sic in prava conversatione mala hauriuntur, etiamsi statim incommodum non sentiatur. Hom. Quod Deus non sit auctor, &c. Finally, the priest must abstain from certain secular amusements, at which the presence of an ecclesiastic does not give edification, such as profane comedies, balls and parties where females are present. But on the other hand, the priest ought to be seen at prayer in the church, making thanksgiving after Mass, and visiting to the blessed sacrament, and the images of the divine mother. Some perform these devotions in private, lest they might be seen by others; but it is better for priests to perform

them in public, not to seek praise, but to give good example, and thereby induce others to praise God. "Videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est."—Mat. v. 16.

THIRD INSTRUCTION.

On Chastity.

11. "No price is worthy of a continent soul."—Eccl., xxvi. 20. In comparison of a chaste soul, all the riches, all the titles, and dignities of the earth are contemptible. Chastity is called by St. Ephrem *the life of the spirit;* by St. Peter Damian, *the queen of virtues;* and by St. Cyprian, *the acquisition of triumphs.* He who conquers the vice opposed to chastity, easily subdues all other vices; and, on the other hand, the man who submits to the tyranny of impurity, easily falls into many other vices, into hatred, injustice, sacrilege, &c. Chastity, says St. Ephrem, changes a man into an angel: "Efficit angelum de homine." And according to St. Ambrose, "he who has preserved chastity is an angel: he who has lost it is a devil."—Lib. 1, de Virgin. The chaste, who live at a distance from all carnal pleasures, are justly assimilated to the angels: "Et erunt sicut angeli Dei."—Mat., xxii. 30. The angels are pure by nature, but the chaste are pure by virtue. "Hujus virtutis merito," says Cassian, "homines angelis æquantur."—L. 6, ins. And St. Bernard asserts that a chaste man differs from an angel only in felicity but not in virtue: "Differunt quidem inter se homo pudicus et angelus, sed felicitate, non virtute; sed etsi illius castitas sit felicior, hujus tamen fortior concluditur."—Ep. 22. St. Basil adds, that chastity renders man like to God, who is a pure spirit: "Pudicitia hominem Deo simillimum facit."—Lib. de Virgin.

12. Chastity is not more excellent than it is necessary for the attainment of salvation. But for priests it is specially necessary. For the priests of the Old Law, the Lord ordered so many white vestments and ornaments, and so many external purifications, as symbols of bodily purity, merely because they were to touch the sacred vessels, and because they were a

figure of the priests of the New Law, who were to handle and to immolate the most sacred flesh of the Incarnate Word. Hence St. Ambrose has written: "Si in figura tanta observantia quanta in veritate?"—Lib. 1, de Offic., c. 5. On the other hand, God ordained that the priests who were habitually infected with irruptions on the skin, the symbols of impurity, should be cast off from the altar: "Non accedet ad ministerium, si albuginem habens in oculo, si jugem scabiem," &c.—Lev., xviii. 20. "Jugem habet scabiem," says St. Gregory, "qui carnis petulantiâ dominatur."—Pastor., part. 1, cap. ult.

13. Even the pagans, as Plutarch writes, required purity in the priests of their false gods; because they thought that whatsoever related to the divine honour, should be clean. *Diis omnia munda.* And of the Athenian priests Plato says, that for the more effectual preservation of chastity, they lived apart from the rest of the people: "Ne contagione aliqua eorum castitas labefactetur."—Apud Sperell., part 1, rag. 17. Hence St. Augustine exclaims: "O grandis Christianorum miseria! ecce pagani doctores fidelium facta sunt." Speaking of priests of the true God, Clement of Alexandria says, that they alone who lead a life of chastity are, or should be, called true priests: "Soli qui puram agunt vitam sunt Dei sacerdotes."—Lib. 3, Strom. "Let the priest be humble and pious" said St. Thomas of Villanova, "if he is not chaste he is nothing." Chastity is necessary for all, but principally for priests. "Omnibus," writes St. Augustine, "castitas pernecessaria est, sed maxime ministris altaris."—Serm. 249, de temp. Priests have to treat on the altar with the immaculate Lamb of God, who is called the "Lily of the valleys," (Cant. ii. 1.) and feeds only among the lilies: "Qui pascitur inter lilia."—Cant., ii. 16. Hence Jesus Christ would have no other mother than a virgin—no other guardian or precursor than a virgin. And St. Jerome says that Jesus loved John above the other disciples on account of the prerogative of chastity. And Jesus intrusted his mother to John on account of his purity, as he consigns to the priest his Church and himself. Hence

Origen says: "Ante omnia sacerdos, qui divinis assistit altaribus, castitate debet accingi." And according to St. John Chrysostom, a priest should have purity which would entitle him to stand among the angels. "Necesse est," says the saint, "sacerdotem sic esse purum ut, si in ipsis cœlis esset collocatus, inter cœlestes illas virtutes medius staret." —De sacerd., lib. 3, cap. 4. Should none, then, but virgins be promoted to the priesthood? St. Bernard answers: "Longa castitas pro virginitate reputatur." —De modo bene vivendi, cap. 22.

14. Hence the holy Church guards nothing with so much jealousy as the purity of her priests. How many councils and canons enforce it? "Let no one," says Innocent III, (in cap. A multis, de ætate et qual. ord.) "be admitted to holy orders unless he be a virgin, or a man of approved chastity," and he ordained that "they who are in holy orders, if they lead not a chaste life, are to be excluded from every dignity: ab omni gradum dignitate."—Ibid. St. Gregory says: "Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium fuerit approbata."—Lib. 1, ep. 42. St. Paul assigns the reason why the ministers of the altar are obliged to lead a life of celibacy: "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife."—1 Cor., vii. 32, 33. He who is free from the conjugal bonds, belongs entirely to God; for he has to think of nothing but of pleasing God. But he who is bound to the married state, has to think of his wife, of his children and of the world. Thus his heart is divided, and cannot belong wholly to God. St. Athanasius, then, had reason to call chastity the house of the Holy Ghost, the life of angels, and the crown of saints: "O pudicitia domicilium Spiritus Sancti, angelorum vita, sanctorum corona."—Lib. de Virginit. And St. Jerome has justly called it the honour of the Church and the glory of priests: "Ornamentum ecclesiæ Dei, corona illustrior sacerdotum." Yes: for, as St. Ignatius, Martyr says,

the priest as the house of God, the temple of Jesus Christ, and the organ of the Holy Ghost, by which souls are sanctified, ought to practise chastity: "Teipsum castum custodi, ut domum Dei, templum Christi, organum Spiritus Sancti."—Epist. 10, ad Herod.

15. Great, then, is the excellence of chastity; but terrible indeed is the war which the flesh wages against men in order to rob them of that precious virtue. The flesh is the most powerful weapon which the devil employs in order to make us his slaves. "Fortitudo ejus in lumbis ejus."—Job, xl. 11. Hence but few gain the victory in this warfare. "Inter omnia certamina," says St. Augustine, "sola sunt dura castitatis prælia, ubi quotidiana pugna, ubi rara victoria."—Tr. de hon. mul. How many miserable men, exclaims St. Laurence Justinian with tears, after many years spent in the solitude of a desert, in meditations, fasting, and penitential austerities, have, for the sake of sensual indulgence, left the desert and have lost chastity and God? "Post frequentes orationes, diutissimam eremi habitationem, cibi potusque parcitatem, ducti spiritu fornicationis deserta reliquerunt."—De spirit. an. Priests, then, who are bound to perpetual chastity, must take great care to preserve it. You shall never practise chastity, said St. Charles Borromeo to an ecclesiastic, unless you are careful to watch over yourself with great diligence; for chastity is easily lost by the negligent: "Mirum est quam facile ab iis deperdatur qui ad ejus conservationem non invigilant." This care and attention consist in taking the means of preserving chastity. These means are, to avoid certain incentives to impurity, and to adopt certain remedies against temptations.

16. The first means is to avoid the occasions of sins against purity. "Primum hujus vitii remedium," says St. Jerome, "est longe fieri, ab eis quorum præsentia alliciat ad malum." St. Philip Neri used to say, that in this warfare cowards, that is, they who fly from the occasions, are victorious. "Nunquam," writes Peter de Blois, "luxuria facilius vincitur quam

fugiendo."—In Ps. 40, v. 1. The grace of God is a great treasure, but this treasure we carry in vessels which are frail and easily broken: "Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus."—2 Cor., iv. 7. Man cannot of himself acquire the virtue of chastity: God alone can give it. "Scivi," said Solomon, "quoniam aliter non possem esse continens, nisi Deus det."—Sap., viii. 21. We have not strength to practise any virtue, but particularly the virtue of chastity; for we have by nature a strong propensity to the opposite vice. The divine aid alone can enable a man to preserve chastity; but this aid God gives not to them who voluntarily expose themselves to, or remain in, the occasion of sin: "Qui amat periculum in illo peribit."—Eccl., iii. 27.

17. Hence St. Augustine gives the following advice: "To repel the attacks of lust, take flight, if you wish to obtain the victory."—Serm. 350, de temp. Oh! how many, said St. Jerome at the hour of death to his disciples, (as we read in the epistle of Eusebius to Pope Damasus,) how many have been cast into the putrid mire of impurity through a presumptuous security that they should not fall: "Plurimi sanctissimi ceciderunt hoc vitio propter suam securitatem. Nullus in hoc confidat." No one, then, adds the saint, should consider himself secure against this vice: though you were a saint, you are always in danger of falling: "Si sanctus es, nec tamen securus es." It is not possible, says the Wise Man, for a man to walk on red hot coals and not be burned: "Nunquid potest (homo) ambulare super prunas, et non comburantur plantæ ejus?"—Prov., vi. 28. On this subject St. John Chrysostom writes: "Num tu saxum es, num ferrum? Homo es, communi naturæ imbecillitati obnoxius. Ignem capis, et non ureris? Qui id fieri potest? Lucernam in fœno pone, ac tu aude negare quod fœnum uratur. Quod fœnum est, hoc natura nostra est." Hence it is not possible for a man to expose himself voluntarily to the occasions of sins against chastity and not fall into a precipice. We should fly from sin as from the face of a serpent: "Quasi a facie colubri fuge peccata."—Eccl., xxi. 2.

We fly not only from the bite of a serpent, but also from contact with, and proximity to it. We must also avoid the company and conversation of persons who may be to us an occasion of yielding to any sin against purity. St. Ambrose remarks that the chaste Joseph would not stop to hear the first words of Putiphar's wife, but instantly fled away, considering that there was great danger in waiting to listen to her: "Ne ipsa quidem verba diu passus est: contagium enim judicavit si diutius moraretur."—De S. Jos. But some one may say: I know my duty; but let him attend to the words of St. Francis of Assisium: "I know what I ought to do, but I know not what I would do, were I to remain in the occasion of sin."

18. It is necessary, above all things, to abstain from looking at dangerous objects. Death is come up through our windows," says the Prophet Jeremias, ix. 21. *Through the windows:* that is, through the eyes, as St. Jerome, St. Gregory, and others say, in their comments on this passage. For, as to defend a fortification, it is not enough to lock the gates if the enemy be allowed to enter by the windows; so to preserve chastity, all other means shall be unprofitable unless we carefully watch over the eyes. Tertullian relates that a certain pagan philosopher plucked out his eyes in order to preserve chastity. This is not lawful for us. But if we wish to avoid sins against purity, we must abstain from looking at females, and still more from looking at them a second time. To look at dangerous objects, says St. Francis de Sales, is not so hurtful to us as to repeat the look. And St. John Chrysostom adds, that it is necessary to turn away the eyes not only from females whose dress or manner is immodest, but even from those whose demeanour is full of modesty: "Animus fertur et commovetur non impudicæ tantum intuitu, sed etiam pudicæ."—Lib. 6, de Sacerd., c. 5. Hence holy Job made a compact with his eyes, not to look at any woman, even at a chaste virgin; because he knew from looks evil thoughts arise: "I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin."—Job, xxxi. 1. Ecclesiasticus

advises us to imitate the example of Job: "Gaze not upon a maiden, lest her beauty be a stumbling block to thee."—Eccl., ix. 5. From looks spring evil thoughts, the thoughts produce a certain carnel delectation, though indeliberate. To this indeliberate delectation, succeeds the consent of the will: and, behold, the soul is lost. Cardinal Hugo remarks that the apostle commanded women to keep their heads veiled in the church, "*because of the angels.*"—1 Cor., xi. 10. That is, because of priests, lest looking at their faces they should be tempted to lust. Even while he lived in a cave at Bethlehem, in constant prayer and penitential austerities, St. Jerome was tormented by the remembrance of the ladies he had long before seen in Rome. Hence he cautioned his friend Nepotianus, to abstain not only from looking at women, but from even speaking of their figure: "Officii tui est non solum oculos castos custodire, sed et linguam, nunquam de formis mulierum disputes."—Epist. ad Nepot. By a single look of curiosity at Bethsebee, David miserably fell into the sins of adultry, homicide, and scandal. "Nostris tantum initiis (diabolus) opus habeat," says the same St. Jerome. The devil only requires that we begin to open the door; he will afterwards open it entirely. A deliberate, fixed look at the countenance of a young female, may be an infernal spark which will cause the ruin of the soul. Speaking of priests, St. Jerome says that they ought to avoid not only every unchaste act, but every glance of the eye: "Pudicitia sacerdotalis non solum ab opere immundo se abstineat, sed etiam a jactu oculi."—In cap. 1, epist. ad Tit.

19. If to preserve chastity we must abstain from looking at females, it is far more necessary to avoid conversation with them. "Tarry not among women," says the Holy Ghost.—Eccl., xlii. 12. The inspired writer subjoins the reason, saying, that as the moth comes from clothes, so the wickedness of men has its origin in conversation with women: "For from garments cometh a moth, and from a woman the iniquity of a man."—Ibid., 13. And, says Cornelius a Lapide, as the moth comes from a garment in spite of the

owner, so from intercourse with women, evil desires spring up, even when we will them not: "Sicut tibi nihil tale volenti nascitur timea, ita tibi nihil tale volenti nascitur a fœmina desiderium." He adds, that as the moth is insensibly generated in, and corrodes the garment, so by conversation with women, concupiscence is imperceptibly excited even in men who are spiritual: "Insensibiliter timea in veste nascitur et eam rodit, sic insensibiliter ex conversatione cum muliere nascitur libido, etiam inter religiosos." St. Augustine regards as certain, the sudden fall of the man who will not avoid familiarity with dangerous objects: "Sine ulla dubitatione, qui familiaritatem non vult vitare suspectam, cito labitur in ruinam."—Serm. 2, in dom. 29. St. Gregory relates (Dial., lib. 4, cap. 2,) of Orsinus, who had separated from his wife, and become a priest with her consent, that forty years after their separation, when he was dying, she put her ear to his mouth to ascertain whether he was still alive; but Orsinus exclaimed: "Recede mulier, adhuc igniculus vivit, tolle paleam." Withdraw, O woman, said he, take away the straw; for I have still a small portion of the fire of life, which may consume us both.

20. Every one should be filled with terror by the unhappy example of Solomon, who after being so dear to God, and so familiar with him, after being made, as it were, the pen of the Holy Ghost, was in his old age, by conversation with pagan women, induced to worship idols. "And when he was now old, his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods."—3 Kings, xi. 4. No wonder; for, as St. Cyprian says, it is impossible to stand in the midst of flames without being burned: "Impossibile est flammis circumdari et non ardere." And St. Bernard has written, that to be familiar with a woman, and to preserve chastity, requires greater virtue than to raise a dead man to life: "Cum fœmina frequenter esse, et fœminam non tangere, nonne plus est quam mortuum suscitare."—Serm. 26, in Cant. If, then, says the Holy Ghost, you wish to be secure, "longe fac ab ea viam tuam."—Prov., v. 8. Do not even pass near the door

of her whom the devil makes an occasion of temptation to you: pass at a distance from it; and should it be really necessary for you to speak to a woman, your words, says St. Augustine, should be few and reserved: "Cum fœminis sermo brevis et regidus."—In ps. 50. St. Cyprian gives the same advice. He says that our intercourse with females should be passing, and as if we were in flight: "Transeunter fœminis exhibenda est accessio quodammodo fugitiva." But some one may say, the female with whom I am familiar, is a person of deformed figure; God forbid she should be an occassion of sin to me. But St. Cyprian answers that the devil is a painter, who when concupiscence is excited, makes a deformed countenance appear beautiful: "Diabolus pingens, speciosum efficit quidquid horridum fuerit." But she is a relative. St. Jerome answers: "Prohibe tecum commorari etiam quæ de tuo genere sunt." Relationship sometimes serves to take away restraint and to multiply sins, by adding the guilt of incest to impurity and sacrilege. "Magis illicito delinquitur," says St. Cyprian, "ubi sine suspicione securum potest esse delictum." St. Charles Borromeo passed a decree that his priests should not without his permission dwell in the same house with females, even with near relatives.

21. But she is a spiritual soul and a saint: there is no danger. Is there no danger? Yes, says St. Augustine, there is danger; and because she is spiritual and a saint, you ought the more to fear, and fly familiarity with her; for the more spiritual and holy a woman is, the more easily she gains the affections of men: "Sermo brevis et rigidus cum his mulieribus habendus est; nec tamen quia sanctiores sunt, ideo minus cavendæ; quo enim sanctiores fuerint, eo magis alliciunt."—Tom. 8, in ps. 50. The venerable Father Sertorio Caputo used to say, as we read in his life, that the devil endeavours first to infuse a love for the virtue of the individual, and thus inspire a security that there is no danger; he then excites sentiments of affection for the person, and afterwards tempts to sin; and thus he causes great havoc. Be-

fore him St. Thomas said the same: "Licet carnalis affectio sit omnibus periculosa, ipsis tamen magis perniciosa quando conversantur cum persona quæ spiritualis videtur; nam quamvis principium videatur purum; tamen frequens familiaritas quanto plus crescit, infirmatur principale motivum, et puritas maculatur." He adds that the devil knows well how to conceal the danger. In the beginning he sends, not poisoned darts, but only those which inflict slight wounds, and kindle an affection; but in a short time, the persons begin to act towards each other not like angels, as in the commencement, but like beings clothed with flesh. The looks are not immodest, but they are frequent and reciprocal; their words appear to be spiritual, but are too affectionate. Each begins frequently to desire the company of the other. "And thus," concludes the saint, "a spiritual devotion is converted into a carnal one." St. Bonaventure gives five marks by which we may know when a spiritual affection has become carnal. First, when there are long and and useless conversations (and when they are long they are always useless); secondly, when there are mutual looks and mutual praise; thirdly, when one excuses the faults of the other; fourthly, when they exhibit certain little jealousies; fifthly, when the absence of one, causes a certain inquietude in the other.

22. Let us tremble: we are flesh. Blessed Jordan severely reproved one of his religious, for having, without any bad motive, once taken a woman by the hand. The religious said, in answer, that she was a saint. But, replied the holy man: "the rain is good, and the earth also, but mix them together and they become mire." Such a man is a saint, and such a woman, too, is a saint, but because they expose themselves to the occasion of sin, both are lost. "The strong hath stumbled against the strong, and both are fallen together."—Jer., xlvi. 12. Listen to the melancholy fall of a holy woman, who, as we read in ecclesiastical history, was accustomed, through charity, to bury the bodies of the holy martyrs. She found one of them whom she believed to be dead;

but finding he was still alive, she brought him to her house and took care of him. He recovered: but what happened? These two saints, by conversing together, lost their chastity and the grace of God. And this has happened, not once, nor a few times: how many Christians, who were saints before, have, by similar attachments, which were at first spiritual, in the end lost their soul and God? St. Augustine attests that he knew some great prelates of the church, of whom he had as high an opinion as of St. Jerome, and St. Ambrose, and who, by exposing themselves to such occasions, fell away from sanctity into sin. "Magnos prælatos Ecclesiæ sub specie corruisse reperi, de quorum casu non magis præsumendum quam Hieronymi et Ambrosii."—Apud S. Thom. opuse. de modo confit. art. 2. St. Jerome wrote to Nepotianus "Ne in præterita castitate confidas: solus cum sola absque teste non sedeas. *Non sedeas*," that is, do not remain with her. St. Isidore Pelusiota says, "if necessity obliges you to converse with them, keep your eyes cast on the ground; and when you shall have spoken a few words, fly away instantly."—Lib. 1, ep. 320. Father Peter Consolini used to say, that we should practice charity towards women, who are even saints, as towards the souls in purgatory, that is, from a distance, and without looking at them. This good father would say, that in temptations against chastity, priests would do well to reflect on their dignity; and would add, that a certain cardinal, when molested by thoughts, began to look at his cap, and to think of his cardinalitial dignity, saying: "My cap, I recommend myself to you" thus he resisted the temptation.

23. It is also necessary to fly from bad company. St. Jerome says, that a man becomes like the companions with whom he converses: "Talis efficitur homo, quali conversatione utitur." We walk in a dark and slippery way; such is the present life, "*Lubricum in tenebris*," if a wicked companion impels us to the precipice, we are lost. St. Bernardine of Sienna relates (c. 4, serm. 10,) that he knew a person who had preserved her virginity for thirty-eight years,

and afterwards, in consequence of having heard an immodest word, fell into such habits of impurity, that, says the saint, the devil himself, if clothed with flesh, could not have been guilty of such filthy abominations.

24. To preserve chastity, it is also necessary to avoid idleness. "Idleness," says the Holy Ghost, "hath taught much evil."—Eccl. xxxiii. 20. Ezechiel says, that it was the cause of all the wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom, and of their total destruction. "Behold! this was the iniquity of Sodom..... ...the idleness of her and of her daughters."—Ezech. xvi. 49. This was, as St. Bernard remarks, the cause of the fall of Soloman. The concupiscence of the flesh is repressed by labour. "Cedet libido operibus," says St. Isidore, de contemptu mundi. Hence, St. Jerome exhorted Rusticus to be always occupied, so that the devil, whenever he came to tempt him, should find him employed: "Facite ut te semper diabolus inveniat occupatum."—Epist. 4. According to St. Bonaventure, the man who is employed, shall be tempted by a single devil, but the idle shall be frequently assailed by many devils: "Occupatus ab uno dæmone, otiosus ab innumeris vastatur."

25. We have seen, then, that for the preservation of chastity it is necessary to avoid idleness and the occasions of impurity. Let us now examine what we must do in order to preserve this great virtue. First, it is necessary to practise the mortification of the senses. If, says St. Jerome, any one wishes to live in the midst of earthly delights, and expects at the same time to be free from the vices which accompany pleasures, he deceives himself: "Si quis existimat posse se versare in deliciis, et deliciarum vitiis non teneri, seipsum decipit."—Lib. 1, contra Jovin. When the Apostle was molested with the stings of the flesh, he had recourse to bodily mortifications: "I," said he, "chastise my body and bring it into subjection."—1 Cor. ix. 27. Unless the flesh be mortified, it will submit to the spirit only with difficulty. "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters."—Cant., ii. 2. As the lily is

preserved among thorns, so chastity is guarded by mortifications. But for him who wishes to practise this sublime virtue, it is, above all, necessary to avoid intemperance, as well in drinking, as in eating. "Give not," says the wise man, "wine to kings."—Prov. xxxi. 4. He who takes more wine than is necessary, shall certainly be molested with many carnal motions, and shall scarcely be able to rule the flesh and make it obedient to the law of Chastity. "Venter enim," says St. Jerome, "mero æstuans despumat in libidinem." For, as the prophet Osee has said, wine deprives man of reason, and reduces him to the level of a brute: "Wine and drunkenness take away the understanding."—Ose. iv. 11. Of the Baptist it was foretold: "He shall drink no wine and strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."—Luke i. 15. Some will argue in favour of the necessity of wine because it is a remedy for the weakness of the stomach. But, according to the words of St. Paul to Timothy, a small quantity of wine is sufficient for that malady: "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities."—1 Tim., v. 23. It is also necessary to abstain from superfluity of food. St. Jerome asserts that satiety of the stomach provokes incontinence. And St. Bonaventure says: "Luxuria nutritur a ventris ingluvie."—De prop. relig. l. 2, cap. 52. But, on the other hand, fasting, as the holy church teaches, represses vice and produces virtue: "Deus, qui corporali jejunio, vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virtutes largiris et præmia."—St. Thomas has written that when the devil is conquered by those whom he tempts to gluttony, he ceases to tempt them to impurity: "Diabolus victus de gula non tentat de libidine."

26. Secondly, it is necessary to practise humility. Cassian says, that he who is not humble cannot be chaste: "Castitatem apprehendi non posse, nisi humilitatis fundamenta in corde fuerint collocata." It happens, not unfrequently, that God chastises the proud by permitting them to fall into some sin against purity. This, as David himself confessed, was the cause of his fall. "Before I was humbled, I offended."

—Ps. cxviii. 67. It is by humility that we obtain chastity; "Ut castitas detur." says St. Bernard, "humilitas meretur."—Epist., 42, c. 15. And St. Augustine writes: "Charity is the guardian of virginity, humility is the place of the guardian."—De. S. Virgin c. 51. Divine love is the guardian of purity, but humility is the house in which this guardian dwells. St. John Climacus used to say, that he who expects to conquer the flesh by continence alone, is like a man in the midst of the ocean, who wishes to save his life, by swimming with a single hand. Therefore, it is necessary to unite humility to continence: "Qui sola continentia bellum hoc superare nititur similis est ei qui una manu natans pelago liberari contendit: sit ergo humilitas continentiæ conjuncta."—De Cast. gardu 15.

27. But above all, to acquire the virtue of chastity, prayer is necessary; it is necessary to pray, and to pray continually. It has been already said, that chastity can neither be acquired, nor preserved, unless God grant his aid to preserve it; but this aid he gives only to those who ask it. Hence, the Holy Fathers teach that, according to the words of Scripture: "Oportet semper orare et non deficere," (Luc., xviii. 1.) "Petite et dabitur vobis," (Mat., vii. 7.) the prayer of *petition* is necessary for adults: "necessitate medii;" that is, as a means without which salvation is impossible. Hence the angelic doctor has said: "Post baptismum necessaria est homini jugis oratio."—3, p. q. 39, art. 5. And, if to practise any virtue, Christians require the divine assistance, they stand in need of still greater help in order to preserve chastity; because they have a strong tendency to the opposite vice. It is impossible, says Cassian, for man, by his own strength, without aid from God, to keep himself chaste; and therefore, in our struggle with the flesh, we must ask the Lord, with all the affection of our soul, for the gift of chastity: "Impossibile est hominem suis pennis ad hujusmodi virtutis præmium evolare, nisi eum gratia evexerit: idcirco adeundus est Dominus et ex totis præcordiis deprecandus."—Hence, St. Cyprian teaches, that the

first means of obtaining chastity, is to ask it of God: "Inter hæc media ad obtinendam castitatem, imo et ante hæc omnia de divinis castris auxilium petendum est." De bono Pudic. And before him, Solomon said: "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord and besought him, and said with my whole heart."—Wis. viii. 21.

28. We should then, says St. Cyprian, instantly resist the first carnal solicitations with which the devil assails us, and not permit the serpent, that is, the temptation, to grow strong: "Primis diaboli titillationibus obviandum est, nec coluber foveri debet donec in serpentem formetur. De jejun." St. Jerome gives this same advice: "Nolo sinas cogitationes crescere: dum parvus est hostis interfice."—Epist, 22. It it easy to kill a lion when he is small, but not when he has grown to his full size. Let us guard against reasoning with temptations contrary to chastity: let us endeavour instantly to banish them. And, as the spiritual masters teach, the best means of banishing such temptations is not to combat them directly face to face, by making contrary acts of the will, but to get rid of them indirectly by acts of the love of God, or of contrition, or at least, by turning the mind to other things. But the means in which we should place the greatest confidence, is prayer, and recommending ourselves to God. It is useful, as soon as we perceive the first motion of impurity, to renew our purpose to suffer death rather than consent to sin, and immediately after, to have recourse to the wounds of Jesus Christ for aid. Thus the saints, who were flesh, and subject to temptations, have acted, and thus they have conquered. "Cum me pulsat," says Augustine, "aliqua turpis cogitatio, recurro ad vulnera Christi: tuta requies in vulneribus salvatoris."—Medit. c. 22. Thus, also, St. Thomas of Aquinas, repelled the attacks of the woman by whom his chastity was assailed: "Ne sinas Domine Jesu," exclaimed the saint, "et sanctissima Virgo Maria."

29. It is also very useful to make the sign of the cross

on the breast; and to have recourse to our angel guardian, and our holy patron. But above all, it is useful to have recourse to Jesus Christ, and the divine Mother, by instantly invoking their most holy names, and by continuing to invoke them until the temptation is beaten down, Oh! how powerful are the most holy names of Jesus and Mary against the attacks of impurity. Devotion to the holy Virgin, who is called *the Mother of fair love, and the guardian of virginity*, is a most useful devotion for the preservation of chastity. And to recite, at rising in the morning, and going to bed at night, three *Aves*, in honour of the purity of Mary, is a devotion which has singular efficacy in obtaining the gift of continence. Segneri relates, that a sinner, addicted to the grossest impurities, went one day to confession to Father Nicholas Zucchi, of the Society of Jesus; the Father prescribed as a remedy for his wicked habits, that he should recommend himself, morning and evening, to the purity of Mary, by saying three *Hail Maries*. After the lapse of several years, the sinner returned to Father Zucchi, and by his confession, showed that all his vices were perfectly corrected. The Father had asked him how such a change had been wrought. He answered that through the little devotion of saying the three *Aves*, he had obtained the grace to change his life. Father Zucchi, with the permission of the penitent, mentioned the fact from the pulpit. There was a soldier present, who was actually in the habit of sins of impurity; he began to say, every day, the three *Aves*, and in a short time, with the aid which the divine Mother obtained for him, he soon renounced the evil habit. Through a false zeal, he went one day to the accomplice of his sins, in order to convert her; but when he was on the point of entering her house, he was suddenly driven back, and found himself transported to a considerable distance. He then understood that his being prevented from speaking to the woman, was a special grace, obtained for him by Mary, for which he thanked her. Had he been placed again in the occasion of sin he would probably have relapsed.

FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

On Preaching, and the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

1. If all preachers and confessors fulfilled the obligations of their office, the whole world would be sanctified. Bad preachers, and bad confessors are the ruin of the world: by bad preachers and confessors, I mean those who do not fulfil their duty as they ought. We shall treat, first, of the Preaching of the divine word; and afterwards, of the administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

SECTION I.

On Preaching.

2. By preaching, the faith has been propagated, and by the same means God wishes it to be preserved: "Fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi."—Rom., x. 17. But for a Christian, it is not enough to know what he is obliged to do: it is, moreover, necessary for him, by hearing the divine word from time to time, to be reminded of the importance of eternal salvation, and of the means which he ought to adopt in order to attain it. Hence, the following command of St. Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."—2 Tim., iv. 2. And the same command, God had, long before, given to the prophet Isaias and Jeremias. To the former he said: "Cry, cease not to lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their wicked doings."—Isa., lviii. 1. To the latter: "Behold I have given my words in thy mouth: lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up and to pull down.....to build and to plant."—Jer., i. 9, 10. The same command he has also imposed on his priests; for, preaching is one of their principal duties. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations.....to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—

Mat., xxviii. 19, 20. And should a sinner be damned through the fault of him who preaches the divine word, God will demand an account of the priest who could have announced the truths of salvation to that lost soul. "If when I say to the wicked, thou shalt surely die; thou declare it not to him.....the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand."—Ezech. iii. 18.

3. But, to save souls, it is not enough to preach: it is, as I have already said, necessary to preach in a proper manner. In the first place, in order to preach well, learning and study are necessary. He who preaches at random will do more injury than service to religion. In the second place, an exemplary life is necessary. The sermons of the man whose conduct excites contempt, shall be despised. "Cujus vita despicitur," says St. Gregory, "quid restat nisi ut prædicatio contemnatur?" And St. Jonn Chrysostom writes: "Denegastis in opere quod videmini profitere in verbo." How is it possible for a priest to persuade by his words, when his acts are in opposition to his doctrine. The preaching of such a man shall serve only for his condemnation: for according to St. Paul, he who reproves in others what he does himself, condemns himself: "Inexcusabilis es.....in quo..... judicas alterum, teipsum condemnas.!'—Rom., ii. 1. Justly, then, did Father M. Avila say to a person who asked what rule he should follow in order to preach well, that the best means of preaching well, was to love Jesus Christ ardently. "He," says St. Gregory, "who is not on fire does not inflame." The divine love must first burn in the preacher, that he may afterwards kindle it in others. St. Francis de Sales used to say, that the heart speaks to the heart. He meant, that words alone speak to the ears, but do not enter the soul. He, alone, who speaks from the heart, that is, he who feels and practises what he preaches, shall speak to the heart of others, and shall move them to the love of God. Hence, according to the words of the Redeemer, "that which ye hear in the ear, preach ye on the house top."—Mat. x. 27, the preacher must have an affection for mental prayer,

in which he may excite the sentiments which he will afterwards communicate to others. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which sacred orators are inflamed with divine love. "In my meditation," says David, "a fire shall flame out."—Ps. xxxviii. 4. Here they form the fiery darts which afterwards wound the hearts of their hearers.

4. Thirdly, it is necessary to preach with a good intention, that is, not for temporal interest, but for the glory of God: not to attract empty praises, but to procure the salvation of souls. Hence, as the Council of Trent ordains, it is the duty of preachers, to preach in a manner accommodated to the capacity of their hearers: "Archipresbyteri.....per se vel alios idoneos, plebes sibi commissas pro eorum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis."—Sess. 5, cap. 2, de refor. Empty words and sounding periods are, says St. Francis de Sales, the pest of sermons. First, because God does not co-operate with vain preaching. Secondly, because the persons who assist at sermons, are generally rude and illiterate, and incapable of understanding flowery discourses. What a pity, sometimes, to see so many of the poor going to the sermon, and afterwards leaving the church afflicted and wearied, without having understood, almost any part of the discourse. Justly, has Father Avila said, that they who preach in a lofty style, not intelligible to the audience, are traitors to Jesus Christ; and that, though sent by him to procure his glory, they seek only their own exhaltation. Justly, too, has Father Jaspar Santius said, that such preachers are, at the present day, the greatest persecutors of the church: because by their sermons, they are the cause of the perdition of many souls, that would be saved by exhortations, composed in a simple and apostolic style. "My preaching," says the apostle, "was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the spirit and power."—1 Cor. ii. 4. In the lives of the saints who were employed in saving souls, I find many praised for preaching in simple and popular language; but I have not found one eulogized for having preached in a laboured and flowery style.

5. It will be useful to abridge, in this place, what the learned and celebrated Muratori has written in his golden little treatise on *popular eloquence*. There are, he says, two sorts of eloquence; the sublime, and popular. The former directs us in the composition of discourses, which treat of lofty subjects, contain ingenious reflections, select language, and turned periods. With the aid of the latter, the eternal truths are expounded nakedly, subjects easily understood are explained in a simple and familiar style, so that each person present may understand the entire instruction. In sermons, we address not only the learned, but also the uninstructed, and these, ordinarily, form the greater part of the audience. Hence, it is always expedient to preach in a simple, popular style; not only in the missions, and spiritual exercises, but also, in all sermons addressed to the people. In the sight of God, the souls of the learned and unlearned are equally precious; and, according to the words of the apostle, "sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum."—Rom. i. 14, the preacher is obliged to seek the sanctification of the latter as well as of the former. Besides, even to the learned, sermons, composed in a simple and familiar style, are more profitable than discourses written in lofty and florid language. For, in sublime discourses, the mind stops to admire and criticise (and this frequently happens); but the will is left without food, and derives no profit from the sermon. The younger Segneri, by preaching in a popular manner, ravished (these are the words of Muratori), the hearts even of the learned. The same was the result of the sermons of St. John Francis Regis. He who wishes to preach, not for the purpose of acquiring praise, but of gaining souls to God, should not seek to hear others say: Oh! what beautiful thoughts! What a splendid speaker! What a great man! But he should desire to see all going away with their heads bowed down, weeping over their sins, resolved to change their lives, and to give themselves to God. The end of true rhetoric is to persuade and move the audience to practice what is inculcated in the discourse. Even in popular eloquence, preachers

avail themselves of the art of rhetoric, of figures, of the arrangement of the arguments, of the language, of the peroration. But all must be done simply and without show of art, in order to reap not applause, but fruit. If, in such sermons, the audience are not delighted by elegant language, and ingenious reflections, they shall certainly be pleased to find themselves enlightened and moved to attend to what alone is important, their eternal salvation.

6. And what has been said is, according to Muratori, applicable to sermons preached in cities, where the audience consists of the ignorant and the learned; but, he adds, that in addressing the common people, or the inhabitants of the villages, the preacher must adopt the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, in order to accommodate his instruction to their weak understanding. He must imagine himself to be one of them, and that another is anxious to instruct him in some duty, and to persuade him to fulfil it. Hence his language ought to be popular and common, the periods short and unconnected, imitating the very mode of reasoning which such persons usually adopt among themselves. In a word, the whole study of the preacher should be to make the audience understand all he says, and to move his hearers most effectually to do what he exhorts them to practise. And as the preacher should adopt a familiar style, so he should also select subjects easily understood; omitting scholastic points and ingenious interpretations of Scripture, which though intelligible, will be unprofitable to the poor and illiterate. The great object should be to explain, nakedly and simply, the eternal truths, the importance of salvation, and to lay before the people the illusions of the devil, the dangers of perdition, and the means to be adopted in some particular cases which may occur. In this consists the breaking of bread to the little ones, which the Lord demands of preachers, and of the general neglect of which he complains: "Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangeret eis."—Thren., iv. 4. In speaking to the uninstructed, it is also very useful to ask questions from time to time,

and to reply to them. It is useful to bring forward examples of the saints, or examples of punishments inflicted on sinners. But above all, it is useful to inculcate things which are practical, and to repeat them several times that they may remain impressed on the weak understanding of the poor.

Such the doctrine of Muratori, which I have here abridged in order to show that the sacred orators who preach in a high and florid style to the poor, who generally compose the audiences in our churches, receive even from the learned, censure rather than praise. This is enough on preaching the divine word. I hope hereafter in treating of the exercises of the mission, to subjoin other reflections on the manner of preaching to be adopted in the missions, and on the method of arranging the sermons. Let us now pass to the administration of the sacrament of penance.

SECTION II.

On Hearing Confessions.

7. The great Pontiff, St. Pius V., said: "Dentur idonei confessarii; ecce omnium Christianorum plena reformatio." He who wishes to be a good confessor must, in the first place, consider that the office of a confessor is very difficult and dangerous, and that on account of its difficulty and danger, the Council of Trent has called it an office to be dreaded even by angels: "Angelicis humeris formidandum."—Sess. 6, c. 1. And what, says St. Laurence Justinian, can be more perilous than to assume the responsibility of rendering to God an account of the life of others? "Periculosa res est pro peccatoribus se fidejussorem constituere."—De. Justif., &c., c. 6, n. 3. St. Gregory says that no error is more dangerous than that which is committed in the direction of souls: "Nullibi periculosius erratur."—Pastor., part. 1, cap. 1. It is certain that if a soul be lost through the fault of her confessor, God will demand of him an account of that soul: "I will require my flock at their hand."—

Ezech., xxxiv. 10. And the apostle writes: "Obey your prelates.....for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls."—Heb., xiii. 17. Hence, according to St. Gregory, a confessor has to render to God an account of as many souls as he has penitents; "Quot regendis subditis præest, reddendæ apud judicem rationis tempore, ut ita dicam, tot solus animas habet."—Lib. 24, mor., c. 16. And St. Chrysostom says: "Si horremus dum peccatorum propriorum rationem reddituri sumus, quid illi expectandum est qui multorum causas sit dicturus?"—Lib. 3, de Sacerd., c. ult.

8. This is not applicable to those good priests who penetrated with a holy fear, labour to qualify themselves for this great office, and afterwards devote themselves to the exercise of it, through the sole desire of bringing souls to God. It is intended only for those who undertake to hear confessions through worldly motives, or temporal interest, or self-esteem, or, as sometimes happens, without the necessary learning. St. Laurence Justinian says: "Gratia indiget plurima et sapientia non modica qui animas ad vitam resuscitare conatur."—De compunct., p. 2, n. 7. He, then, who wishes to hear confessions, stands in need of extensive knowledge. Some imagine the science of moral theology to be easy, but Gerson justly says that it is the most difficult of all sciences. And before him St. Gregory said: "Ars artium regimen animarum."—Pon. past., p. 1. St. Gregory Nazianzen writes: "Scientia scientiarum mihi esse videtur hominem regere."—St. Francis de Sales also used to say that the office of confessor is of all offices the most important and the most difficult. It is the most important, because no it depends the eternal salvation of souls, which is the end of all the sciences. It is the most difficult, because the science of moral theology requires a knowledge of many other sciences, and embraces an immense variety of matter. It is also most difficult, because different decisions must be given according to the different circumstances of the cases which occur. For, a principle by which a case involving a certain circumstance, may be decided,

will not answer for the solution of another case containing a different circumstance.

9. Some distain to read the works of the moralists, saying that to hear confessions is enough to know the general principles of moral theology, by which, they add, the particular cases may be resolved. I answer: it is certain that all cases must be decided by means of principles, but there is great difficulty in applying to particular cases just principles of solution. This the moralists have done. They have laboured to explain the principles by which many particular cases may be resolved. Besides, at present there is a great number of positive laws contained in the bulls and decrees of pontiffs, as well as in the ancient canons; and which a confessor is obliged to know. Of these laws, he who neglects to read moral theology, shall scarcely be able to acquire a competent knowledge. The learned author of *the Instruction for Young Confessors,* justly says that many divines are as deficient in moral theology, as they are profound in the speculative sciences. But, on the other hand, Monsignor Sperelli asserts that it is a great error in some confessors to devote all their time to scholastic theology, considering the study of moral theology as lost time. Such confessors, as he says, are afterwards unable to distinguish one sin from another. He then adds: "Qui error confessarios simul et penitentes in æternum interitum trahet."—De ep. p. 3, c. 4. We must, then, be persuaded that to hear confessions, great science and also great prudence are required; for with knowledge without prudence, a confessor shall do but little good, and, to some, his ministry will be more injurious than beneficial.

10. Sanctity is still more necessary, on account of the great fortitude which a confessor requires in the exercise of his ministry. "Nemo nisi valde sanctus," says St. Laurence Justinian, "absque sui detrimento proximorum curis occupator." In the first place a confessor requires a great fund of charity in receiving all, the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious. Some hear the confessions only of pious persons; but when a poor peasant comes with a conscience loaded with

sins, they hear him with impatience, and send him away with reproaches. Hence the miserable man, who must have done great violence to himself in resolving to go to confession, seeing himself dismissed in such a manner, will conceive a horror for the sacrament, and a dread of approaching it any more; and thus, through despair, will abandon himself to a dissolute life. To such confessors the Redeemer (who came to save sinners, and was therefore full of charity,) says what he said to his disciples: "You know not of what spirit you are."—Luke, ix. 55. But such is not the conduct of confessors who, in obedience to the exhortation of the apostle, put on the bowels of charity: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God.....the bowels of mercy."—Col., iii. 12. When a sinner comes to confession, the more abandoned he is, the more they labour to assist him, and the greater the charity with which they treat him. You are not, says Hugo of St. Victor, appointed judges of crimes, to chastise, but, as it were, judges of maladies to heal."—Misc. 1, lib. 1, tr. 49, lib. 3. It is indeed necessary to admonish the sinner, in order to make him understand his miserable state, and the danger of damnation to which he is exposed; but he must be always admonished with charity, he must be excited to confidence in the divine mercy, and must be taught the means by which he may amend his life. And though the confessor should be obliged to defer absolution, he ought to dismiss the penitent with sweetness; fixing a day for him to return, and pointing out the remedies which he must practise in the mean time, in order to prepare himself for absolution. Sinners are saved in this way, but not by harshness and reproaches, which drive them to despair. St. Francis de Sales used to say: "More flies are caught by a drop of honey than by a pound of aloes." But some will say, if we treat sinners in this manner, a great deal of our time will be taken up, and others who are waiting cannot be heard. But in answer I say, that it is better to hear one confession well than to hear a great number imperfectly. But the most appropriate answer is, that the confessor

has not to give an account to God of the persons who are waiting, but only of the person whose confession he has begun to hear.

11. The confessor also stands in need of great fortitude. Great fortitude is necessary in correcting penitents and in refusing absolution to those who have not the requisite dispositions, without any regard to their rank or power, or to the loss or injury which the confessor may sustain, or to the imputations of indiscretion, or of ignorance, which may be cast upon him. "Seek not," says the Holy Ghost, "to be made a judge unless thou hast strength enough to extirpate iniquities, lest thou fear the person of the powerful." —Eccl., vii. 6. A father of our congregation had occasion to hear in the sacristy the confession of a priest, whom he refused to absolve. The priest rising up in a proud and haughty manner, said to him: "Begone, you are a brute." But there is no remedy: poor confessors must submit to such inconveniences and insults. For it often happens that they are bound to refuse or to defer absolution, either because the penitent will not do what they require of him, or because he is a relapsing sinner, or because he is in the proximate occasion of sin. And here it is necessary to examine how a confessor should treat relapsing sinners, and those who are in the occasion of sin. For in order to save his penitents, the confessor should attend with the greatest care to relapsing sinners, and to those who are in the occasion of sin.

12. But, before we enter on this subject, it is necessary to remark, that a confessor exposes himself to as much danger of damnation, by treating his penitents with too much rigour, as he does by treating them with excessive indulgence. Too much indulgence, says St. Bonaventure, begets presumption, and too much rigour leads to despair: "Cavenda est conscientia nimis larga et nimis stricta; nam prima generat præsumptionem, secunda, desperationem: prima sæpe salvat damnandum, secunda contra damnat salvandum"—Comm. Theol. de verit. L. 2, cap. 32, n. 1. There is no doubt but many err by being too indulgent; and such persons cause great havoc;

and, I say, even the greatest havoc; for libertines, who are the most numerous class, go in crowds to these lax confessors, and find in them their own perdition. But it is also certain that confessors, who are too rigid, cause great evil. "You ruled over them with rigour, and with a high hand. And my sheep were scattered," &c.—Ezech. xxxiv. 4, 5. Too much rigour, says Gerson, serves only to bring souls to despair, and from despair to the abyss of vice: "Per ejusmodi assertiones rigidas et nimis strictas in rebus universis nequaquam eruuntur homines e luto peccatorum, sed in illud profundius quia desperatius demerguntur."—Lib. 4, p. 3. Hence, he says in another place: "Doctores theologi non debent esse faciles ad asserundum aliqua peccata mortalia ubi non sunt certissimi de re." Such, also is the doctrine of St. Raymond: "Non sis," says the saint, "nimis pronus judicare mortalia peccata ubi tibi non constat per certam Scripturam."—L. 3, de pœnit. s. 21. St. Antonine teaches the same: "Quæstio," he says, "in qua agitur utrum sit peccatum mortale vel non nisi ad hoc habeatur auctoritas expressa Scripturæ, aut Canonis ecclesiæ, vel evidens ratio, periculosissime determinatur."—Part. 2, tit. 1, c. 11, s. 28. For, as the saint adds, he who, without some of the above mentioned grounds, pronounces an action to be a mortal sin, exposes souls to the danger of damnation: "Ædificat ad gehennam." Speaking of the vain ornaments of women, the same holy archbishop says: "Ex prædictis igitur videtur dicendum quod ubi in hujusmodi ornatibus confessor invenit clare et indubitanter mortale, talem non absolvat, nisi proponat abstinere a tali crimine. Si vero non potest clare percipere utrum sit mortale, non videtur tunc præcipitanda sententia (ut dicit Gulielmus specie in quadam simili,) scilicet ut deneget propter hoc absolutionem, vel illi faciat conscientiam de mortali; quia faciendo postea contra illud, etiamsi illud non esset mortale, ei erit mortale, quia omne quod est contra conscientiam ædificat ad gehennam. Et cum promtiora sint jura ad solvendum quam ad ligandum (Can, Ponderet., dis. 1.) et melius sit Domino reddere rationem de nimia misericordia,

quam de nimia severitate ut dicit Chrysostomus (Can. Allegant 26, quæst. 7.), potius videtur absolvendus et divino examini dimittendus."—Summa., par. 2, tit. 4, c. 5. Sylvester holds the same opinion (verb. scrupulus): "Dico, secundum archiepiscopum, quod tuta conscientia potest quis eligere unam opinionem et secundum eam operari, si habeat notabiles auctores, et non sit expresse contra determinationem ecclesiæ," &c. The same is taught by John Nider, who after stating the doctrine of William, says: "Concordat etiam Bernadus Claramontensis dicens; si sint opiniones inter magnos dicentes quod peccatum est, alii vero dicunt quod non; tunc debet consulere aliquos de quorum judicio confidit et secundum consilium discretorum facere et peccatum reputare vel non reputare. Ex quo enim opiniones sunt inter magnos, et ecclesia non determinat alteram partem, teneat quam voluerit, dummodo judicium in hoc resideat propter dicta eorum saltem quos reputat peritos."—Consol. an. timor., 3 p., c. 20. This is conformable to the words of St. Thomas: "Qui ergo assentit opinioni alicujus magistri contra manifestum scripturæ testimonium vel contra id quod publice tenetur secundum ecclesiæ auctoritatem, non potest ab erroris vitio excusari."—Quod lib. 3, a. 10. Then, according to the angelic doctor, a person is excused from error when the opinion which he holds rests on the foundation of authority, and is not opposed to any clear passage of Scripture, or to any definition of the Church. Finally, the same doctrine has been laid down more clearly by Gabriel Briel who flourished in the year 1480: "Prima opinio," he says, "videtur probabilior; quia nihil debet damnari tanquam mortale peccatum de quo non habetur evidens ratio vel manifesta auctoritas Scripturæ."—In 4. dis. 16. q. 4. concl. 5.

13. But let us come to particulars, and examine how a confessor ought to treat persons who are in the proximate occasion of sin, and habitual sinners who relapse into any vice. With regard to those who are in the occasion of sin, it is necessary first to distinguish various kinds of occasions. First, the occa-

sion may be *remote* or *proximate*. The remote occasion is that in which a person rarely sins, or in which men, commonly speaking, seldom fall. The occasion which is itself proximate, is that in which men always, or nearly always, fall. The occasion which is proximate by accident, or the respective occasion is that in which a particular person frequently sins. This is the correct definition of the respective occasion, according to the true and common opinion of theologians, in opposition to those who hold that the proximate occasion is that in which a person always, or nearly always, yields to sin. The occasion of sin is also divided into *voluntary* and *necessary*. The occasion is voluntary, when it can be removed: it is necessary, when it cannot be avoided without grievous loss or grievous scandal to others.

14. Many theologians say, that he who is in the voluntary proximate occasion, may be absolved once or twice, provided he has a firm purpose of removing it as soon as possible. But here it is necessary to distinguish, with St. Charles Borromeo, in his *Instructions to Confessors*, occasions which are *in esse;* such as when a person keeps a concubine in his house, from those which are not *in esse*, such as when in gaming, or conversation, a person falls into blasphemies, quarrels, and the like. In the occasions which are not *in esse*, St. Charles says that the penitent who sincerely promises to renounce them, may be absolved the second or third time, but unless he afterwards gives proof of amendment, he should not be absolved until he has actually removed the occasion. In the occasions which are *in esse*, the saint says that a promise is not sufficient, and that the penitent cannot be absolved until he has taken away the occasion of sin. Ordinarily speaking, this opinion should certainly be followed; as I have shown in my Moral Theology, (lib. 6, n. 434.) by the authority of many authors. A penitent who wishes to receive absolution before the removal of such an occasion, is not disposed for the sacrament: because he is in the proximate danger of violating his purpose as well as the obligation by which he is bound under pain of mortal sin to remove

the occasion. To take away proximate occasions is very painful and difficult, and can be effected only by doing great violence to oneself. But he who has already received absolution, will scarcely offer such violence to himself. Freed from the fear of being deprived of absolution, he will flatter himself with the hope of being able to resist temptations without taking away the occasion; and thus remaining in the occasion, he shall certainly relapse. This we know by the experience of so many miserable sinners, who after receiving absolution from over-indulgent confessors, neglect to remove the occasion of sin: thus they fall back and become worse than before. Hence on account of the danger of violating the purpose which he has made of removing the occasion of sin, the penitent who wishes to be absolved before he takes it away, is not disposed for absolution, and therefore the confessor who absolves him, is certainly guilty of sin. And here let it be observed, that, generally speaking, the greater the rigour with which the confessor treats his penitents, when there is question of the danger of formal sins, particularly against chastity, the more he will promote their sanctification. But, on the other hand, the greater his indulgence, the greater his cruelty to their souls. St. Thomas says that confessors who are too indulgent, are impiously merciful: "Impie pios." Such charity is contrary to charity.

15. I have said, *ordinarily speaking;* for in some rare cases, the confessor may absolve before the occasion is removed. For example, if the penitent had evinced a strong determination to amend his life, along with great compunction, and is unable to take away the occasion for a long time; or if he could not return to the same confessor; or if there should be other extraordinary circumstances, which would oblige the confessor to absolve him. But such cases are very rare. Hence persons who are in the proximate occasion of sin, can scarcely ever be absolved, until they have first removed it; particularly if they promised at other times to take away the occasion, but did not afterwards fulfil their promise. It is use-

less to say that a penitent who is disposed for the sacrament, has, after the confession of his sins, a strict right to receive absolution; for it is the common opinion of theologians that a person who has confessed his sins, has not a strict right to be immediately absolved, and that the confessor can and should, as a spiritual physician, defer absolution whenever he knows that by deferring it he will promote the amendment of his penitent.

16. What has been said applies to voluntary occasions: but if the occasion be necessary, generally speaking there is not a strict obligation of removing it; for when the penitent does not wish, but rather suffers and permits it against his will, he may hope for greater help from God to resist the temptation. Hence ordinarily speaking, he who is in a necessary occasion of sin, may be absolved, provided he is determined to adopt all the means necessary to guard against a relapse. There are three principal means to be prescribed in necessary occasions. The first is to fly from the occasion, by avoiding as much as possible to be alone with the accomplice, to speak confidentially with her, or to look at her. The second is prayer and unceasing petition to God and the Blessed Virgin, for help to resist the temptation. The third is the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and of the eucharist, by which strength is obtained to resist temptations. I have said, *generally speaking;* for when after having used all the means, the penitent always relapses, without any amendment, then, according to the more common and true opinion, which is to be followed, he cannot be absolved until he quits the occasion of sin, though it should cost him his life, *(etiam cum jactura vitæ,* as the theologians say); for he should prefer eternal to temporal life. I add, that though according to the rules of moral theology, a person who is in the necessary occasion of sin, may be absolved whenever he is properly disposed for the sacrament, still when the occasion leads to sins against purity, it will, ordinarily speaking, be expedient to defer absolution until it appears by the experience of a considerable time, of twenty or thirty days, that

the penitent has been faithful in practising the means prescribed, and that he has not relapsed. I also add, that when the confessor knows that it will be useful to defer absolution, he is bound to defer it; for he is obliged to abopt the most efficacious remedies for the amendment of his penitent. I say, moreover, that when a person is long habituated to sins of impurity, it will not be enough for him to avoid proximate occasions, it will be also necessary for him to remove certain occasions which of themselves would, perhaps, be remote, but with regard to him will be not remote but proximate. Because by so many relapses, he has become weak and strongly inclined to the vice of impurity.

17. With regard to relapsing sinners, it is necessary to distinguish between them and habitual sinners. Habitual sinners are those who have contracted a habit of any vice, but have never confessed the habit. If they are truly penitent and firmly resolved to adopt the means of overcoming their evil habit, they may be absolved the first time they confess the habit, or when the confess the sin after having, for a considerable time, retracted the habit. But let it be observed, that when a penitent has contracted a bad habit, particularly if it has become inveterate, the confessor can certainly defer absolution, in order to try by experience how the penitent practised the means prescribed. But relapsing sinners are those who, after confession have fallen back into the same habit without any amendment. They cannot be absolved when they show only the ordinary signs of repentance; such as the confession of their sins, along with a declaration that they are penitent, and resolved to amend their lives. For Innocent XI, has justly condemned the following proposition: "Pœnitenti habenti consuetudinem peccandi contra legem Dei, naturæ, aut ecclesiæ, etsi emendationis spes nulla appareat, nec est neganda nec differenda absolutio, dummodo ore proferat se dolere et proponere emendationem." Because although the confession itself, along with a declaration on the part of the habitual sinner that he is sorry for his sins, and resolved to avoid them for the future,

gives a kind of moral certainty that he is disposed for the sacrament, unless there is a presumption in favour of the contrary, still when a habit has been contracted, and when, without any improvement, several relapses have taken place after absolution, there is strong reason to suspect that the sorrow and purpose of amendment of the penitent are not sincere. Hence, such a penitent should not be absolved until he shows by a change of conduct for some time, and by practising the means prescribed, that he has the dispositions necessary for the sacrament. And remember that this holds not only for those who relapse into mortal sin, but also for those who relapse into venial sins which many penitents confess through custom, but without sorrow and a purpose of amendment. If they wish to receive absolution, the confessor should make them give certain matter for the sacrament, by the confession of a more grievous sin of their past life, for which they are truly penitent, and which they are firmly resolved to avoid for the future.

18. Hence, to absolve relapsing sinners, it is necessary for the confessor to try, for some time, the sincerity of their repentance; or, at least, to see some extraordinary signs of sorrow, which exclude the conditions of the condemned propositions, and give a well founded hope of their amendment. These signs are, according to the theologians, first, great compunction, manifested by tears or by words, proceeding not from the mouth but from the heart. From expressions of this kind, we sometimes get more certainty of a penitent's fitness for absolution, than even from tears. Secondly, a considerable diminution in the number of sins, though the penitent was exposed to the same occasions and temptations. Thirdly, greater caution against relapses, by avoiding the occasions, and by practising the means prescribed; or a great struggle made before consenting to sin. Fourthly, when the penitent asks, with a sincere desire of amendment, for new remedies or means of freeing himself from the sin. If he come to confession, not to conform to any pious custom already established, such as the practice of going to the sacraments at

Christmas, or any other determinate festival; not by the direction of a parent or master, but through a desire infused by God, of recovering the divine grace; particularly if the penitent has put himself to great inconvenience in order to come to confession, by making a long journey; or if he has come, after a great struggle, or after doing great violence to himself. Fifthly, if he has been impelled to go to confession by hearing a sermon, by the account of the sudden death, or some great calamity of another; or by any other extraordinary spiritual motive. Sixthly, if he confesses sins previously concealed through shame. Seventhly, if the penitent shews that, by the admonition of the confessor, he has acquired new light, and a new horror for his sins, and a new dread of the danger of being lost. Some theologians place, among the extraordinary signs of repentance, a firm promise, made by the penitent, to practise the remedies prescribed by his confessor; but unless there is some other sign, the confessor can seldom trust to such promises. For, in order to obtain absolution the more easily, penitents make many promises which they are not firmly resolved to fulfil.

19. Whenever, then, there are such extraordinary signs, a confessor may absolve a relapsing sinner; but he may also defer absolution for some time, when he knows that delay will be profitable to his penitent. Some maintain that it is not always expedient to defer the absolution of a relapsing sinner who has the necessary dispositions: others teach that it is better to put off the absolution, unless the delay, and privation of communion should give others grounds of suspicion injurious to the reputation of the penitent. My opinion is, as I have stated in my *Instructions to Confessors*, (cap. ull. s. 11,) that where there is no external occasion, and the sins are committed through internal frailty, (such as plasphemies, hatred, pollution, morose delectation. &c.,) it is seldom expedient to defer absolution. For we may always hope for better fruit from the aid of the grace which the penitent receives from the sacrament, than from the delay of absolution. But when there is an external oc-

casion, though necessary, I, as has been already said, deem it expedient, and generally speaking, necessary for the amendment of the penitent, who is even disposed for the sacrament, to defer absolution.

FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

On Mental Prayer.

1. If, as the most learned Suares has asserted, mental prayer is morally necessary for all the faithful, it is still more necessary for priests. Because priests stand in need of greater help from God, on account of the greater obligations by which they are bound to seek perfection, of the greater sanctity of their state, and on account of the office which they hold, of procuring the salvation of souls. Hence, like mothers, who require more corporal nutriment than others, because they have to support themselves and their children, priests stand in need of a double portion of spiritual nourishment. Hence, St. Ambrose says, that to teach us the necessity of mental prayer, our Saviour separated from the people, and went up the mountain to pray ("et dimissa turba, ascendit in montem solus orare."—Mat., xiv. 23,) although he did not require to go into solitary places in order to pray; for his blessed soul, always enjoying the intuitive vision of God, was employed in all places, and in every occupation in the contemplation of the divinity, and in praying for us. St. Luke tells us, that he spent entire nights in prayer: "Erat pernoctans in oratione."—vi. 11. On this passage, St. Ambrose says, if Jesus Christ has spent nights in prayer for your salvation, how much more ought you to pray in order to save your soul: "Quid enim te pro salute tua facere oportet, quando pro te Christus in oratione pernoctat?"—Lib. 5, in Luc. Hence, the saint has written in another place: "Sacerdotes semper orationi vacare debent."—In 1, ad Tim. 3. Father M. Avila used to say,

that the offices which a priest holds of offering sacrifice, and of offering incense, go together: "Incensum...Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt."—Lev., xxi. 6. Every one knows that incense, signifies prayer: "Dirigatur Domine oratio mea, sicut incensum in conspectu tuo."—Ps. 140. Hence, St. John saw the angels, "having.....golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints."—Apoc. v. 8. Oh! what sweet odour do the prayers of good priests give to God! On account of the necessity of mental prayer for ecclesiastics, St. Charles Borromeo ordained, in the Council of Milan, (part. 3, de exam. ordin.) that every ecclesiastic, before his ordination, should be interrogated in a special manner, whether he knew how to make mental prayer, whether he was in the habit of making it, and what meditation he used. Father M. Avila once dissuaded a person from taking priesthood, because he was not accustomed to make mental prayer.

2. I do not intend to detail, at length, the reasons why the practice of mental prayer is morally necessary for every priest. It is enough to say, that without mental prayer, a priest has but little light: for without it he will reflect but little on the great affair of salvation, he will scarcely see, the obstacles to it, and the obligations which he must fulfil in order to be saved. Hence the Saviour said to his disciples: "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands."—Luke, xii. 35. These lamps, says St. Bonaventure, are holy meditations in which the Lord enlightens us: "Accedite ad eum et illuminamini."—Ps. xxxvi. 6. He who does not make mental prayer, has but little light and little strength. In the repose of meditation, says St. Bernard, we acquire strength to resist enemies and to practise virtue: "Ex hoc otio vires proveniunt." He who does not sleep during the night is not able to stand steady, and goes tottering along the road: "Be still and see that I am God."—Ps. xiv. 11. He who neglects to withdraw, at least now and then, from the thoughts of the world, and to retire to converse with God, has but little knowledge or light regarding the things of eternity. See-

ing, one day, that his disciples had been greatly occupied in works of fraternal charity, Jesus Christ said to them: "Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little."—Mark, vi. 31, Retire into some solitary place and rest a while. Our Lord spoke of the repose, not of the body, but of the spirit, which unless it retire from time to time to converse alone with God, has not strength to persevere in doing good, but easily faints and falls into sin in the occasions which occur. All our strength is in the divine aid: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—Phil., iv. 13. But this aid, God gives only to those who pray for it. He is most desirous of dispensing his graces to us; but, as St. Gregory says, he wishes that we pray to him, and that we, as it were, compel him by our prayers to grant them to us: "Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci."—In Ps. Pœn. 6. But he who neglects mental prayer, has but little knowledge of his defects, of the dangers of losing the divine grace, of the means of conquering temptations, and of the need he has of asking God's graces; thus he will neglect to ask them, and neglecting to pray for them, he shall certainly be lost. Hence St. Teresa of Jesus, used to say, that he who neglects mental prayer, does not stand in need of devils to carry him to hell, but brings himself to that land of woe.

3. Some say many vocal prayers; but he who does not make mental prayer, will scarcely say his vocal prayers with attention; he will say them with distractions, and the Lord will not hear him. "Multi clamant," says St. Augustine, "non voce sua, sed corporis. Cogitatio tua clamor est ad Dominum. Clama intus, ubi Deus audit."—In Ps. 30. It is not enough to pray with the tongue alone, we must, according to the Apostle, pray also with the heart, if we wish to receive God's graces: "Orantes omni tempore in spiritu."—Eph. vi. 18. And by experience we see that many persons who recite a great number of vocal prayers, the office and the rosary, fall into sin, and continue to live in sin. But he who attends to mental prayer, scarcely ever falls into sin, and should

he have the misfortune of falling into it, he will hardly continue to live in such a miserable state; he shall either give up mental prayer, or renounce sin. Meditation and sin cannot stand together. However abandoned a soul may be, if she perseveres in meditation, God will bring her to salvation. All the saints have become saints by mental prayer. "Exoratione," says St. Laurence Justinian, fugatur tentatio, abscedit tristitia, excitatur fervor, et divini amoris flamma succrescit."—De Casto Connub., c. 22, n. 3. St. Ignatius used to say, that to remove the disturbance of mind caused by the greatest calamity which could befal him, a meditation of a quarter of an hour, would be sufficient. St. Bernard has written: "Consideration rules the affections, directs the actions, corrects excesses."—De Consid. lib. 1, cap. 7. St. Chrysostom regards as dead, the soul that does not make mental prayer: "Quisquis non orat Deum nec divino ejus colloquio cupit assidue frui, is mortuus est, &c. Animæ mors est non pervolvi coram Deo."—Lib. 1, de orando Deo. Ruffinus says, that all the progress of the soul depends on meditation: "Omnis profectus spiritualis ex meditatione procedit."—In Ps. 36. And Gerson goes so far as to assert that he who does not meditate, cannot, without a miracle, lead a Christian life: "Absque meditationis exercitio nullus, secluso miraculo Dei ad Christianæ religionis normam attingit."—De Med. consid. 7. Speaking of the perfection to which every priest is bound, St. Lewis Gonzaga justly said, that without a great zeal for mental prayer, a soul shall never attain great virtue.

[He who desires more detailed proofs of the moral necessity of mental prayer, is referred to the chapter on meditation in the Nun Sanctified."—Vol. 2, page 32.]

4. I here omit many other arguments which I could adduce in favour of the necessity of mental prayer; I will only answer three excuses put forward by priests who neglect meditation. Some say, "I do not make mental prayer, because I am subject to desolation, to distractions, and temptations; I have a wandering mind which I cannot confine to the subject of medi-

tation, and therefore I have given up mental prayer. But, to such persons, St. Francis de Sales says, that if in their meditations they do nothing else than banish distractions and temptations, the meditation is well made, provided the distraction is not voluntary. The Lord is pleased with a good intention, and with a patient endurance, during the whole time prescribed for meditations, of the pain arising from distractions, and will bestow many graces in return. We ought to go to prayer, not to please ourselves, but to please God. Even holy souls generally suffer aridity in meditation, but because they persevere, God enriches them with his blessings. St. Francis de Sales used to say, an ounce of prayer made amid desolations, is of greater value before God, than a hundred pounds of it in the midst of consolations. Even statues do honour to a prince by standing in his galleries. Whenever, then, the Lord wishes us to remain as statues in his presence, let us be content to honour him as statues. It will then be enough to say to him: Lord, I remain here to please you. St. Isidore says, that the devil never labours so hard to tempt and distract us as in the time of meditation: "Tunc magis diabolus cogitationes ingerit, quando orantem aspexerit."—Lib. 3, Sent. cap. 3. And why? because he knows the great fruit which we draw from meditation, and therefore he endeavours to make us give it up. They, then, who abandon mental prayer on account of the tediousness which they feel in it, give great delight to the devil. In the time of aridity, the soul should do nothing else than humble herself, and ask God's graces. She should humble herself, for there is no better time for understanding our own miseries and insufficiency than when we are desolate in prayer: we then see, that of ourselves we can do nothing. Hence we should do nothing else than, uniting ourselves with Jesus, desolate on the cross, humble ourselves and ask mercy, saying and repeating, Lord assist me: Lord have mercy on me: my Jesus, mercy. Meditation, made in this manner, will be the most fruitful of all: for to the humble God opens his hands, and dispenses his graces: "God resisteth the

proud and giveth his grace to the humble." St. James. iv. 6. Let us then, more than ever, fervently implore mercy for ourselves and for poor sinners. God requires, in a special manner, of priests that they pray for sinners. "The priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: spare, O Lord, spare thy people."—Joel., ii. 17. But in answer to this, some may say: it is enough for me to say the divine office. But St. Augustine writes, that the barking of dogs is more pleasing to God, than the prayers of bad ecclesiastics. The ecclesiastic who neglects mental prayer, soon falls away from virtue, for without meditation he shall scarcely acquire the ecclesiastical spirit: "Plus placet Deo latratus canum quam oratio talium clericorum."

5. Others say, if I neglect mental prayer, I do not mispend my time; I employ it in study. But the Apostle said to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself and to doctrine."—1 Tim. iv. 16. Attend, first *to thyself*, that is, to prayer, and then to doctrine, that is, to study, in order to procure the salvation of others. If we are not saints, how can we make others become saints? "Beatus qui te novit, et alia nescit," says St. Augustine. If we knew all sciences and knew not how to love Jesus Christ, our knowledge shall profit us nothing to eternal life. But if we know how to love Jesus Christ, we shall know all things, and shall be happy for eternity. Happy, then, the man to whom is given the science of the saints, that is, the science of loving God: "Et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum."—Sap., x. 10. A single word from a priest who truly loves God, will produce more fruit in others than a thousand sermons of the learned who love God but little. But this science of the saints is not acquired by the study of books, but by mental prayer, in which the master who instructs, and the book which is read, is a crucified God. Being asked, one day, by St. Thomas, from what book he had acquired so much learning, St. Bonaventure pointed to the crucifix, and said, that there he had acquired all his knowledge. Sometimes a person learns more in a moment, during the time of meditation, than he

would in ten years spent in the study of books. "In anima," says St. Bonaventure, "incomparabiliter per amoris unitivi desideria perfectio amplioris cognitionis relinquitur quam studendo conquiratur."—De Themyst., cap. 3, p. 2. Human sciences require a good understanding; in the science of the saints, it is enough to have a good will. He who loves God most ardently, knows him best. Love, says St. Gregory, is knowledge; and according to St. Augustine, to love is to see: "Amare videre est." David exhorts us to taste and see how sweet the Lord is: "Gustate et videte quam suavis est Dominus."—Ps. xxxiii. 9. He who tastes God most by loving him, sees him most clearly, and has the most perfect knowledge of the immensity of his goodness. He who tastes honey, has a more correct notion of it, than all the philosophers who study and explain its properties. "If," said St. Augustine, "God is wisdom, a true philosopher is a lover of God."—Lib. 8, de civit. c. 1. God is wisdom itself; then the true philosopher (by philosopher is meant a person who loves wisdom,) is one who truly loves God.

6. To learn worldly sciences, much time and labour are necessary; but to learn the science of the saints, it is enough to wish and ask for it. The wise man says, that "Wisdom.....is easily seen by them that love her, and is found by them that seek her. She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself to them."—Wis., vi. 13, &c. The divine wisdom is easily found by all who seek and covet her; she is found, even before she is sought. "He that watcheth early to seek her, shall not labour, for he shall find her sitting at his door."—Ibid. He who seeks her with diligence, shall not labour to find her, for he shall find her sitting at his door waiting for him. Finally, Solomon concludes: "Now all good things came to me with her."—Wis., vii. 11. That is, he who finds wisdom, or the love of God, finds all goods. Oh! how much more did St. Philip Neri learn in the grottos of St. Sebastian, where he spent entire nights in meditation, than in all the books which he had read! How much more did St. Jerome learn in

the cave of Bethlehem, than in all his studies! Father Suares used to say, that he would rather lose all his knowledge than one hour's mental prayer. "Sibi habeant," says St. Paulinus, "sapientiam suam philosophi, sibi divitias suas divites, sibi regna sua reges: nobis gloria et possessio et regnum Christus est."—Epist. 27. Let the learned of the world enjoy their wisdom, let the rich possess their wealth, and kings their kingdoms; but let Jesus Christ be our wisdom, our riches, our kingdom; let us say, with St. Francis: "*Deus meus et omnia.*" This true wisdom, we should, in a special manner, ask of God; for he will certainly give it to all who pray for it. "If any of you want wisdom," says St. James, "let him ask of God who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not."—St. James, i. 5. I do not deny that study is useful, and even necessary for priests; but the study of the crucifix is still more necessary. In a letter to Jiovius, who devoted a great deal of time to the study of the works of the philosophers, but through pretence of not having time, paid but little attention to the exercises of a spiritual life, the same St. Paulinus writes: "Vacat tibi ut philosophus sis, non vacat ut Christianus sis?"—Epist., 36. Some priests spend so much time in the study of mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and profane history, (Oh! that they would, at least, study what is better suited to their state,) and afterwards say, that they have not time to make mental prayer. To them it should be said: "Vacat tibi ut eruditus sis, non vacat ut sacerdos sis? Seneca says, that we have little time because we lose a great deal of it: "Nos exiguum tempus habemus, sed multum perdimus."—De brev. vitæ. And in another place, he says: "Necessaria ignoramus, quia superflua addiscimus."

7. Others say, I would wish to make mental prayer, but I am so much occupied in hearing confessions, and preaching, that I have not a moment to spare. I answer: I praise you, dearly beloved priest, for seeking the salvation of souls, but I cannot praise you for forgetting yourself in order to assist others. We must attend, first to ourselves, by making mental

prayer, and then to our neighbour. The holy apostles laboured more than all others for the salvation of souls, but finding that their exertions for the good of others interfered with prayer, they appointed deacons for the performance of the external works of charity, that thus they themselves might have time for prayer, and the preaching of the divine word: "Fratres viros .....constituamus super hoc opus. Nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus."—Act, vi. 3, 4. But remark, they attended, first, to prayer, and then to preaching; because without prayer sermons produce but little fruit. This is what St. Teresa wrote to the Bishop of Osma, who paid great attention to the care of his flock, but devoted little time to prayer. "Our Lord," says the saint, in a letter to him, "has shown me that you are wanting in what is particularly necessary for you, (and when the foundation gives way, the edifice falls to ruin,) you fail in mental prayer, and do not persevere in it; from this defect arises the aridity which the soul suffers."—Let. 8. St. Bernard admonished Pope Eugenius not to omit meditation on account of external affairs; and added, that he who gives up mental prayer, may fall into hardness of heart, which will destroy all remorse for his faults, so that after having committed them, he shall feel no hatred for them: "Timeo tibi, Eugeni, ne multitudo negotiorum, intermissa oratione et consideratione te ad cor durum perducat quod se ipsum non exhorret, quia non sentit."—Lib., 1, de consid. ad Eug.

8. St. Laurence Justinian says, that the works of Martha, without the recollection of Mary, cannot be perfect: "Marthæ studium sine Mariæ gustu non potest esse perfectum."—De instit. Prælat. c. 11, n. ult. He deceives himself, says the saint, who expects, without the aid of prayer, to succeed in the work of saving souls, a work as dangerous as it is sublime; without the reflection of mental prayer, he shall certainly faint on the way: "Fallitur quisquis opus hoc periculosum absque orationis præsidio, consummare putat: in via deficit, si ab interna maneat refectione jejunus."—Loc. cit. Our Lord commanded his dis-

ciples to preach what they heard in prayer: "Quod in aure auditis prædicate super tecta."—Mat., x. 27. By the ear in this place, is understood, the ear of the heart, to which God promises to speak in the solitude of prayer: "Ducam eam in solitudinem et loquar ad cor ejus."—Os., ii. 14. In prayer, says St. Paulinus, we conceive the spirit, which we must afterwards communicate to others: "In oratione fit conceptio spiritualis."—Ep. 4, ad Sever. Hence, speaking of priests, St. Bernard complained, that though a priest should be first a cistern, that is, full of holy lights and affections collected in prayer, and afterwards a canal to diffuse them among his neighbours, still there are in the church, many canals, and few cisterns: "Sacerdos concham te exhibebis, non canalem; canales hodie in Ecclesia multos habemus, conchas perpaucas."—Serm., 18, in Cant. Hence, before a priest engages in works of charity to others, he should have recourse to prayer. "Priusquam proximorum lucris incumbat." says St. Laurence Justinian, "orationi intendat." Hence, on the passage of the Canticles, "Trahe me post te: curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum," (i. 3), St. Bernard has written, that the priest who has zeal for the salvation of souls, ought to say to God: "Non curram ego solum, current adolescentulæ mecum: curremus simul, ego odore unguentorum tuorum, illæ meo excitatæ exemplo."—Serm., 2, in Cant. My God, draw me to yourself; for drawn by you, I will run with you, and others also shall run with me: I shall run, drawn by the odour of your ointments, that is, by the inspirations and graces which I shall receive in prayer, others shall be drawn by my example.

9. That a priest may be able to draw many souls to God, he must first prepare himself to be drawn by God. Such has been the conduct of holy workmen in God's vineyard, of St. Dominick, St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Xavier, St. John Francis Regis. They employed the day in labouring for the people, and spent the night in prayer, and persevered in that holy exercise until they were overcome by sleep. A priest of moderate learning and great zeal will bring more

souls to God than a great number of tepid though learned priests. "Sufficit," says St. Jerome, "unus homo zelo succensus totum corrigere populum." A single word from a priest, inflamed with holy charity, will do more good than a hundred sermons, composed by a theologian who has but little love of God. St. Thomas of Villanova used to say, that words of fire, which are, as it were, darts of the fire divine love, are necessary to wound and inflame hearts with the love of God. But how, adds the saint, can these darts of fire issue from a heart of snow? It is meditation that inflames the heart of holy workmen in the vineyard of the Lord, and transforms them from snow into fire. Speaking especially of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us, the Apostle says: "Charitas enim Christi urget nos."—2 Cor., v. 14. He means, that it is impossible for any one to meditate on the sorrows and ignominies which our Redeemer has endured for us without being inflamed, and without seeking to inflame others, with his love: "Haurietis aquas in gaudio," says the Prophet Isaias, "de fontibus salvatoris et dicetis in illa die: confitemini Domino et invocate nomen ejus."—Isa., xii. 3, 4. The fountains of the Saviour are the examples of the life of Jesus Christ, from the consideration of which souls draw sweet waters, lights, and holy affections; and inflamed with these affections, they endeavour to kindle them, also, in others, exhorting them to confess and praise, and love the goodness of our God.

[It may be useful to say something here on the recitation of the divine office.]

10. By the divine office, God is honoured, the fury of the enemy is repelled, and the divine mercies are obtained for sinners. But to attain these ends, it is necessary to recite the office in a proper manner, it is necessary to say it "*studiose et devote*," as the fifth Council of Lateran has taught, in the celebrated Canon, *Dolentes*. *Studiose*, by pronouncing the words distinctly, *devote*, that is, with attention, as Cassian teaches: "Hoc versetur in corde quod profertur in ore."—Coll. 23, cap. 7. How, asks St. Cyprian, can you expect that God will hear you when you do not

hear yourself? "Quomodo te audiri postulas, cum teipsum non audias."—Serm. de or. domin. Prayer made with attention, is that ordoriferous incense which is most agreeable to God, and obtains treasures of grace; but prayer made with voluntary distraction, is a fetid smoke which provokes the divine wrath, and merits chastisement.

11. Hence, while we recite the office, the devil labours strenuously to make us say it with distractions and defects. We should, then, take all possible care to recite it in a proper manner. First, it is necessary to enliven our faith and to consider that in reciting the divine office, we unite with the angels in praising God. "Officium futuræ civitatis adipiscimur," says Tertullian. We then perform on earth the office of the citizens of heaven, who unceasingly praise God and shall praise him for eternity: "In sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te."—Ps. lxxxiii. 5. Hence, as St. Chrysostom remarks, before we enter the church, or take up the breviary, we must leave at the door, and dismiss all thoughts of the world: "Ne quis ingrediatur templum curis onustus muudanis; hæc ante ostia deponamus."—Hom. 2, in cap. 5. Isa. Secondly, in reciting the divine office we must take care that our affections accompany the sentiments contained in what we read. It is necessary, says St. Augustine "si psalmus orat, orare; si gemit gemere; si sperat, sperare." Thirdly, it is useful to renew our attention from time to time; for example, at the beginning of every psalm. Fourthly, we must be careful not to give occasion to mental distractions. How can he who recites the office in a public place, or in the midst of persons who are jesting and amusing themselves, how, I ask, can he say it with piety and devotion? Oh! what treasures do they lay up who daily recite the divine office with devout attention? St. Chrysostom says that they are filled with the Holy Ghost: "Implentur Spiritu Sancto." But, on the other hand, they who say it negligently, lose great merits, and have to render a great account to God.

SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

On Humility.

1. "Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde."—Mat., xi. 29. Humility and meekness were the two beloved virtues of Jesus Christ, in which he wished in a special manner to be imitated by his disciples. We shall speak first of humility, and afterwards of meekness. St. Bernard says, "Tanto quisque debet esse humilior, quanto est sublimior."—De 7. don. Sp. S. c. 7. The more exalted, then, the dignity of the priest, the greater should be his humility; otherwise, if he fall into sin, the greater the height from which he is precipitated, the more disastrous his fall. Hence St. Laurence Justinian says that the priest should regard humility as the most precious jewel that shines forth in his character: "Humilitas est sacerdotum gemma."—De inst., præl., c. 21. And St. Augustine writes: "In summo honore summa sit humilitas."—De temp., serm. 213. And before him, Jesus Christ said, "Qui major est in vobis, fiat sicut minor."—Lucæ, xxii. 26. Humility is truth. Hence the Lord has said, that if we know how to separate the precious from the vile, that is, what belongs to God from what belongs to ourselves, we should be like his mouth, which always speaks truth: "Si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris."—Jer., xv. 19. Hence we must always pray with St. Augustine: "Noverim te, noverim me."—Lib. de vita beata. St. Francis of Assisium, admiring in God his greatness and goodness, and in himself his own unworthiness and misery, used to say continually to the Lord: "Who art thou, and who am I?" Hence the saints at the sight of the infinite perfections of God, humbled themselves to the very earth. The more they know God, they better they see their own poverty and defects. The proud, because they are bereft of light, have but little knowledge of their own vileness.

2. Let us, then, continue to separate what is ours from what belongs to God. Ours is nothing but

misery and sin. And what are we but a little fetid dust, infected by sin? How, then, can we be proud? "Quid superbis terra et cinis?"—Eccl., x. 9. Nobility, wealth, talent, ability, and the other gifts of nature, are but a garment placed over a poor mendicant. If you saw a beggar glorying in an embroidered garment thrown over him, would you not pronounce him to be a fool? "Quid autem habes, quod non accepistis? Si autem accepisti quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis?"—1 Cor., iv. 7. Have we any thing which God has not bestowed upon us, or which he cannot take away whenever he pleases? The gifts of grace which God confers upon us, also belong to him, and we contaminate them by so many defects, distractions, acts of impatience, and inordinate motives, "All our justices are as the rag of a menstruous woman."—Isa., lxiv. 10. Thus, after having said our Masses, offices, and prayers, though perhaps we esteem ourselves more enlightened and rich in merits, we deserve from the Lord the reproof which he gave to the bishop in the Apocalypse: "Dicis...dives sum ...et nescis quia tu es miser...et cœcus et nudus."—Apoc., iii. 17. St. Bernard writes: "Quidquid minus est fervoris, humilitas suppleat confessionis."—Serm. de div. 26. If we know that we are poor and full of faults in the sight of God, let us at least humble ourselves and confess our miseries. St. Francis Borgia, while a secular, was advised by a holy man, if he wished to make great progress in virtue, to reflect every day on his own miseries. Hence the saint spent every day, the first two hours of prayer in endeavouring to know and despise himself. He thus became a saint, and has left us so many beautiful examples of humility.

3. St. Augustine says: "Altus est Deus; humilias te, et descendit ad te; erigis te et fugit a te."—Serm. de Ascen. To the humble, God unites himself and gives the treasures of his graces; but from the proud he withdraws and flies away: "Abominatio Domini est omnis arrogans."—Prov., xvi. 5. The proud man is an abomination to the Lord. "God," says St. James, "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the

humble."—iv. 6. The Lord hears the prayers of the humble. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds.....and he will not depart till the Most High behold."—Eccl., xxxv. 21. But, on the other hand, he rejects the petitions of the proud: *he resisteth the proud.* He looks at the proud as from a distance. "The Lord.....looketh on the low, and the high he knoweth afar off."—Ps. cxxxvii. 6. When we see a person at a distance, we know him not; thus God feigns, as it were, not to know nor to hear the proud when they pray to him: "They call upon him, but he answers: "Amen, dico vobis, nescio vos."—Mat., xxv. 12. In a word, the proud are hateful to God and to men. "Pride," says Ecclesiasticus, "is hateful before God and men."—Eccl. x. 7. Men are sometimes compelled by necessity to pay external honour to the proud; but in their heart they hate them, and censure them before others. "Where pride is," said Solomon, "there also shall be reproach."—Prov., xi. 2. Praising the humility of St. Paul, St. Jerome writes: "Fugiendo gloriam, gloriam merebatur, quæ virtutem quasi umbram sequitur, et appetitores sui deserens appetit contemptores." As the shadow follows him who flies from it, and flies from him who pursues it, so glory follows them who fly from it, and fly from them who seek it. "Qui autem se exaltaverit." says Jesus Christ, "humiliabitur, qui se humiliaverit, exaltabitur."—Mat., xxiii. 12. A priest, for example, does a good work; he is silent about it, but as soon as it is known, all praise him. But if he goes about proclaiming it to others, in order to receive applause, he shall earn reproach instead of praise. What a shame, says St. Gregory, to see the teachers of humility become, by their example teachers of pride? "Doctores humilitatis, duces superbiæ?"—Lib. 4, ep. 66. You may say, I manifest my works to make known the truth, and to procure praise for the Lord; but I answer in the words of Seneca: "Qui enim non tacuerit, non tacebit auctorem." Every one who hears a priest speaking of his good works, will suppose that he relates them in order to be praised; thus he shall lose the esteem of men

and merit before God who seeing him praised according to his desire, will say to him what he said to the hypocrites in the synagogue: "Amen, I say unto you, they have received their reward."—Mat., vi. 2. The Lord has declared that three species of sinners he hates with a special hatred; and that the first is a poor man that is proud. "Three sorts my soul hateth, and I am greatly grieved at their life: a poor man that is proud; a rich man that is a liar; and an old man that is a fool."—Eccl., xxv. 3, 4.

4. But let us come to practise. Let us examine what we must do in order, to be humble, not in name, but in reality. In the first place, it is necessary to entertain a great fear of the vice of pride; for, as has been already said, God resists the proud, and deprives them of his graces. A priest, particularly, in order to preserve chastity, stands in need of a special aid from God. But how can a proud priest practise that sublime virtute, if in punishment of his pride, the Lord withholds his assistance? "Pride," says the Wise man, "is a sign of approaching ruin. The spirit is lifted up before a fall."—Prov., xv. 18. Hence St. Augustine has gone so far as to say that it is in a certain manner useful to the proud to fall into some manifest sin, that thus they may learn humility and a horror of themselves: "Audeo dicere, superbis esse utile cadere in aliquod peccatum apertum unde sibi displiceant."—Lib. 14, de civ. Dei, cap. 11. This is what happened to David, who, as he himself afterwards confessed with tears, fell into adultery because he was not humble: "Priusquam humiliarer ego deliqui."—Ps. cxviii. 67. St. Gregory calls pride the seminary of impurity; because some, while they are exalted by the spirit of pride, are precipitated into hell by the flesh: "Multis sæpe superbia luxuriæ seminarium fuit: dum eos spiritus in altum evexit, caro in infernum mersit."—Lib. 29, moral., c. 13. The spirit of pride easily brings with it the spirit of impurity. "The spirit of fornication," says the Prophet Osee, "is in the midst of them.....and the pride of Israel shall answer in his face."—Osee, v. 4, 5. Ask certain persons why they always fall back into the

same *impurities; pride* shall *answer* for them, that it is the cause of their relapses; they are full of self-esteem, and therefore the Lord chastises them by permitting them to remain immersed in their abominations; a chastisment which, as the apostle says, has already fallen on the wise of the world: "Tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditia, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semetipsis."—Rom., i. 24.

5. The devil has no fear of the proud. Cesarius relates (lib. 2. c. 5.) that, a demoniac being once brought to a Cistercian monastery, the prior took with him a young religious who had the reputation of being a man of great virtue, and said to the evil spirit: If this monk shall command you to depart, will you dare to remain? I have no fear of him, replied the enemy, because he is proud. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that the devil treats a proud priest as a play-toy; that is, he throws him up and pulls him down as he pleases. Hence the saints have had a greater dread of pride and vain glory, than of any temporal calamity which could befal them. Surius relates of a holy man who was greatly esteemed and honoured on account of the miracles which he wrought, that finding himself often assailed by vain glory, he besought the Lord that he might be possessed by an evil spirit; his prayer was heard, and he was possessed for five months. He was then delivered from the infernal spirit, and from the spirit of vanity which molested him. For this purpose the Lord also permits even saints to be tormented by temptations against purity, and after they prayed to be freed from them, he leaves them as he left St. Paul, to combat with the temptations. "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.'"—2 Cor., xii. 7. Thus, according to St. Jerome, a sting of the flesh was given to St. Paul to warn him to be humble: "Hic monitor

datus est Paulo ad terendam superbiam."—Ep. 27, ad Paulam. Hence St. Gregory concludes: "Per humilitatis custodiam servanda est munditia castitatis." Let us here make another reflection. To humble the pride of the people of Egypt, the Lord sent not bears and lions, but frogs to molest them. What do I mean? God permits us to be annoyed by certain little expressions, by certain little aversions, by certain trifles, that we may know our miseries and may humble ourselves.

6. Secondly, it is necessary to guard against glorying in any good which we may do, particularly if we are raised to the height of the priesthood. The offices entrusted to us are very great. To us is given the great office of offering to God, the sacrifice of his own son. To us is confided the care of reconciling sinners with God, by preaching, and by the administration of the sacraments: "Dedit nobis ministerium reconcilliationis."—2 Cor., v. 18. We are ambassadors and vicars of Jesus Christ, and are made the tongues of the Holy Ghost: "Pro Christo ergo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos."—Ibid., v. 20. St. Jerome says, that the highest mountains are most violently assailed by the tempest; the more exalted, then, is our dignity, the more we are exposed to the molestation of vain glory. We are esteemed by all, we are respected as men of learning, and as saints. He who stands on a great height is in danger of dizziness. How many priests have fallen into precipices because they were not humble. Montanus wrought miracles, and he afterwards, through ambition, became an heresiarch. Tatian wrote at great length, and with great success, against the Pagans, and through pride he fell into heresy. Brother Justin, a Franciscan, attained the highest degree of contemplation, and he afterwards died an apostate from religion, and was lost. In the life of Palemon we read, that a certain monk walked on fire, and boasted of it, saying to his companions, which of you can walk on red hot coals without being burnt? St. Palemon corrected him, but the unhappy man being full of himself, fell into sin and died in that

miserable state. A proud spiritual man is the worst of robbers; because he usurps not earthly goods, but the glory of God. Hence, St. Francis was accustomed to say: Lord! if you give any good, watch over it, otherwise I will steal it from you. Thus, we priests, must pray, and say with St. Paul: "Gratia .....Dei sum id quod sum."—1 Cor., xv. 10. For, of ourselves, we are incapable, not only of doing good works, but of even having a good thought: "Non quod sucffientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis."-2 Cor., iii. 5.

7. Hence the Lord says to us: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which we ought to do."—Luke, xvii. 10. Of what use can all our works be to God? What need can he have of our possessions? "I have said to the Lord," said David, "thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods."—Ps., xv. 2. And Job said: "If thou do justly.....what shall he receive of thy hand."—Job., xxxv. 7. What can God receive from you to increase his riches? Moreover, we are useless servants, besause however much we do for a God who merits infinite love, and has suffered so much for the love of us, it is all nothing. Hence the apostle writes: "If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me, for a necessity lieth upon me."—1 Cor., ix. 16. To all that we do for God, we are bound by our obligations and by gratitude; particularly as all that we do is his work more than it is ours. Who would not laugh at the clouds, if they boasted of the rain which they send down? This is the language of St. Bernard: "Si glorientur nubes, quod genuerint imbres, quis non irrideat?" He then adds, that we ought to praise, not so much the saints for the works which they perform, as God who operates through them: "Lauda Deum in sanctis suis, qui in ipsis manens facit opera." —Serm. 13, in Cant. St. Augustine says the same: "Si quid boni est, parvi vel magni, donum suum est, et nostrum nonnisi malum est."—In Soliloq. And in another place, speaking to God, he writes: "Quisquis tibi enumerat merita sua, quid tibi enumerat nisi merita tua?—Lib., ix. de concion. c. 13.

8. Hence, when we do any good, we must say to the Lord: "Quæ de manu tua accepimus, dedimus tibi."—1 Par. xxix. 14. When St. Teresa performed any good work, or saw a good act done by others, she began to praise God for it, saying that it was entirely his work. Hence, St. Augustine remarks, that unless humility go before, pride will steal from us all the good we do: "Nisi humilitas præcesserit, totum extorquet de manu superbia." Ep. 5, ad Dioscor. And in another place he says: "Superbia bonis operibus insidiatur ut pereant."—Ep. 56. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that the more God favours a soul by special graces, the more she ought to humble herself that she may not lose all. All is lost by every little consent to self-esteem. He, says St. Gregory, who performs many virtuous actions, but has not humility, is like a man who scatters dust before the wind: "Qui sine humilitate virtutes congregat quasi in ventum pulverem portat."—In 2, Ps. pœnit. Tritemius has written: "thou hast despised others, thou art become worse than others." The saints have not only not boasted of any perfection, but have sought to make known to others what redounded to their own contempt. Father Villanova, of the Society of Jesus, felt no repugnance to tell all that his brother was a poor workman. Father Sacchini, also a Jesuit, meeting in a public place, his father, who was a poor muleteer, ran to embrace him, and said: Oh! behold my father." Let us read the lives of the saints, and pride shall depart from us: there we shall find the great things which they have done, at the sight of which we shall feel ashamed of the little we have done.

9. Thirdly, it is necessary to live in continual distrust of ourselves. Unless God assists us, we shall not be able to preserve ourselves in his grace: "Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem frustra vigilat qui custodit eam."—Ps. cxxvi. 1. If God work not in us, we shall be unable to do any good: "Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam." Some saints, with very moderate learning, have converted entire nations. By certain discourses

which he preached in Rome, though the language was simple, and even incorrect, (for he had but an imperfect knowledge of the Italian tongue,) St. Ignatius of Loyola, because his words came from a heart that was humble and enamoured of God, produced such an effect on the hearers that they instantly went to confession, but could scarcely speak on account of the many tears which they shed (vita 1. 3, cap. 2.) But, on the other hand, many learned theologians, with all their science and eloquence, preach without converting a single soul. In them are verified the words of the Prophet Osee: "Give them a womb without children, and dry breasts."—ix. 14. Such preachers, because they are puffed up with their learning, resemble unfruitful mothers, they have the name, but are without children. And should they be entrusted with the child of another, with an infant that stands in need of milk, the little one shall die of hunger, for the paps of the proud are filled with wind and smoke, but give no milk: "Scientia inflat, charitas vero ædificat."—1 Cor., viii. 1. To this evil the proud are subject. It is, as Cardinal Bellarmine wrote to one of his nephews, difficult for a man of learning to be humble, not to despise others, not to censure their acts, not to be full of his own opinions; he will hardly submit willingly to the judgment and correction of others. It is true that we ought not to preach at random, or without consideration and study; but after we have studied the discourse, and after we have delivered it with zeal and success, we ought to say, *servi inutiles sumus*, and should expect the fruit, not from our own labours, but from the hands of God. And what proportion can there ever be between our words and the conversion of sinners? "Shall the axe boast itself against him that cutteth with it?"—Isa., x. 15. Can the axe say to him who fells the tree: this tree, I, and not you, have cut down? We are like so many pieces of iron, incapable even of motion, unless God moves us: "Sine me nihil potestis facere."—John, xv. 5. On this passage St. Augustine writes: "Non ait, sine me parum potestis facere, sed nihil."—In Jo. tract. 18. And the apostle has said:

"Non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis."—2 Cor., iii. 5. If we are incapable of having, even a good thought, of ourselves, how much less shall we be able to perform a good action? "Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase."—1 Cor., iii. 7. It is neither the preacher, nor the confessor who exhorts them, that makes souls advance in virtue: no, it is God that does all. "Let us," says St. Chrysostom, "call ourselves useless servants, that we may be made useful."—Hom. 38. Whenever, then, we are praised, let us instantly give the honour to God, saying: "Soli Deo honor et gloria."—1 Tim., i. 17. And when any office or work is given us by obedience, let us not be diffident at the sight of our inability, but let us have confidence in God, who speaks to us by the mouth of our superior, and says to us: "Ego ero in ore tuo."—Exod., iv. 15.

10. "Gladly," says the apostle, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."—1 Cor., xii. 9. We, too, should say the same, we should glory in the knowledge of our insufficiency, that thus we may acquire the power of Jesus Christ, that is, holy humility. Oh! what great things, do the humble effect! "Nothing," says St. Leo, "is difficult to the humble."—Serm. 5, de Epiph. No, for the humble, trusting in God, act with the strength of the divine arm, and therefore they effect whatsoever they wish. "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength."—Isa., xl. 31. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say, that the man who wishes that God should make him do great things, must labour to be the most humble of all. The humble man says: "Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."—Phil., iv. 13. When he finds an undertaking difficult, he does not despair of success, but says: "In Deo faciemus virtutem."—Ps., lix. 14. Jesus Christ did not wish to select men of power and learning for the conversion of the world, but poor ignorant fishermen, because they were humble, and distrustful of their own strength. "The weak things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the strong..... That all flesh should not

glory in his sight."—1 Cor. i. 27. Even when we see that we are subject to defects, we must not be diffident. Though we should relapse into the same faults after many purposes, and many promises made to God, we should not abandon ourselves to diffidence, as the devil tempts us to do, in order to precipitate us into greater sins; but we must then, more than ever, trust in God's goodness, making use of our failings to increase our confidence in the divide mercy. Thus we are to understand the words of the apostle: "Omnia co-operantur in bonum."—Rom., viii. 28. The Gloss adds: "*Etiam peccata.*" Hence our Lord, sometimes permits us to fall, or to relapse into a defect, that thus we may learn to distrust ourselves, and to confide only in the divine aid. Hence David said: "Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me."—Ps., cxviii. 71. Lord, thou hast permitted these, my faults, for my good, that I may learn to be humble.

11. Fourthly, to acquire humility, it is, above all, necessary to accept humiliations which come to us from God, and from men, and in the time of humliation, to say with Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I deserved."—xxxiii. 27. Some, as St. Gregory remarks, say with the tongue that they are sinners, that they are wicked, and deserving of every species of contempt; but they do not believe what they say; for, when despised or reproved by others, they are disturbed. "Multi," says St. Ambrose, in a letter to Constance, "habent humilitatis speciem, sed non virtutem." Cassian relates, that a certain monk, who used to protest that he was a great sinner, and unworthy of living on earth, was corrected by the abbot Serapion, for a considerable fault, which consisted in going about idly to the cells of the other monks, instead of remaining in his own, according to his rule. The monk became instantly agitated, so as to manifest externally, the disturbed state of his interior. The abbot said to him: "My son, hitherto you have declared that you deserved nothing but opprobrium, and why are you, now, so indignant at a word of charity which I have said to you?" The same

happens to many who would wish to be esteemed humble, but are unwilling to suffer any humiliation. "There is," says Ecclesiasticus, "one who humbleth himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit."—Eccl. xix. 23. St. Bernard has said, that to seek praise from humility, is not humility, but the destruction of humility: "Appetere de humilitate laudem, humilitatis non est virtus, sed subversio."—Serm., 16, in Cant. To seek praise from humility, only foments pride, by the desire of being reputed humble. He who is truly humble, has a low opinion of himself, and wishes others to think of him as he thinks himself. "Est humilis," says St. Bernard, "qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem." The truly humble man, when treated with contempt, humbles himself still more, and acknowledges that he justly deserves the humiliation. Finally, let us bear in mind that unless we are humble, we shall not only do no good, but we shall not be saved: "Nisi...efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum cœlorum." Mat. xviii. 3. In order, then, to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must become children, not in age, but in humility. St. Gregory says, that as pride is a sign of reprobation, so humility is a mark of predestination: "Reproborum signum est superbia, humilitas electorum."—In Ps. lxxi. 2. And St. James has written, "that God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—St. James, iv. 6. From the proud, God withholds his graces, but to the humble he opens his hand and dispenses his favours. Be humble, says Ecclesiasticus, and expect from the hands of God, as many graces as you desire. "Humble thyself to God, and wait for his hands."—Eccl. xiii. 9. And our Saviour has said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John, xii. 24, 25. A priest who dies to self-love, shall produce great fruit; but he who dies not to himself, and resents insults, or trusts in his own talents, *remaineth alone;* he remains alone, and will produce no fruit for himself or others.

SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

On Meekness.

1. "Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde."—Mat., xi. 29. Meekness is the virtue of the lamb: lamb is the name by which Jesus Christ wished to be called: "Ecce agnus Dei."—John i. 29. "Emitte agnum.....dominatorem terræ."—Isa., xvi. 1. And like a lamb, he conducted himself in his passion. "He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth."—Isa., liii. 7. "As a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim."—Jer., xi. 19. Meekness was the beloved virtue of the Saviour. He showed the extent of his meekness in doing good to the ungrateful, in submitting sweetly to his enemies, and in bearing without complaint, all who insulted and maltreated him. "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not, but delivered himself to him who judged him unjustly."—1 Pet. ii. 23. After been scourged, crowned with thorns, covered with spittle, nailed to a cross, and saturated with opprobrium, he forgot all, and prayed for them who had thus maltreated him. Hence, he has exhorted us, above all things, to learn from his example, humility and meekness: "Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde." St. John Chrysostom says, that meekness is, of all virtues, that which renders us most like to God: "Mansuetudinem præ cæteris virtutibus nos Deo conformes facere."—Hom. 19, in ep. ad Roman. Yes, for it belongs to God alone, to render good for evil. Hence the Redeemer has said: Benefacite his qui oderunt vos.....Ut sitis filii Patris vestri qui in cœlis est, qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos."—Mat., v. 44, 45. Hence according to St. Chrysostom, Jesus Christ has called the meek, imitators of God. "Eos solos," says the holy doctor, "qui hac (mansuetudine) conspicui sunt Dei imitatores Christus nominat." To the meek, paradise is promised: "Beati mites quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram."—Mat., v. 4. St. Francis de Sales says, that meekness is the flower of

charity. And Ecclesiasticus has said: "Beneplacitum est illi fides et mansuetudo."—i. 34, 55. A meek and faithful heart is the delight of God. He knows not how to cast off the meek: "Suscipiens mansuetos Dominus."—Ps., cxlvi. 6. The prayers of the humble and meek are very pleasing in the sight of God: "Humilium et mansuetorum semper tibi placuit deprecatio."—Judith. ix. 16.

2. The virtue of meekness consists in two things. First, in restraining the motions of passion against those who provoke us to anger; and secondly in bearing insults. With regard to the first, St. Ambrose says that the passion of anger ought to be either avoided or restrained: "Aut caveatur, aut cohibeatur." He who feels himself prone to the vice of anger, should endeavour to avoid the occasions of it; and should he through necessity be exposed to them, he ought to prepare himself before-hand by good resolutions, either to be silent, to answer with sweetness, or to pray to God for strength to resist the temptation, and not to yield to passion. Some excuse themselves by saying, such a person is very impertinent, his conduct is insufferable. But according to St. Chrysostom, the virtue of meekness consists not in being agreeable to the meek, but in treating with sweetness those who know not what meekness is: "Cum his qui sunt a mansuetidine alienissimi tunc virtus ostenditur."—In ps. 119. When a neighbour is enraged, there is no better means of appeasing his anger than by answering with sweetness: "Responsio mollis frangit iram."—Prov. xv. 1. As water extinguishes fire, so, says St. Chrysostom, a mild answer softens the anger of a brother, however great may be his excitement: "Sicut rogum accensum aqua extinguit, ita animam ira æstuantem verbum cum mansuetudine prolatum mitigat."—Hom. 98, in Gen. —This is conformable to the words of Ecclesiasticus: "Verbum dulce multiplicat amicos et mitigat inimicos." —Eccl., vi. 3. St. Chrysostom adds: "Igne non potest ignis extingui nec furor furore."—Loc. cit. Even towards sinners the most abandoned, obstinate and insolent, we priests must exercise all possible

meekness, in order to draw them to God. Hugo of St. Victor has written: "Vos non quasi judices ad percutiendum positi estis, sed quasi judices morborum ad sanandum."—Misc. 1, lib. 1, tit. 49, t. 3. When, on the other hand, we feel ourselves assailed by any motion of anger, the remedy is to be silent, and to ask strength from God not to make a reply. "Remedium in mora est," says Seneca; for should we speak while we are inflamed with passion, what we say will appear reasonable, but it will be unjust and sinful. For passion is a certain veil which covers the eyes of the soul, and does not permit us to see the unreasonableness of our reply. "Turbatus præ ira oculus rectum non videt," says St. Bernard, lib. 2, de consid., c. 11.

3. Sometimes it appears to us just, and even necessary, to repress the boldness of a person who treats us with insolence: for example, of an inferior who acts disrespectfully towards us. It would indeed be right in such circumstances, to show moderate displeasure; to be, as the angelic doctor says, angry according to right reason. (2. c. q. 158, a. 1, ad 3.) This is conformable to the words of David: "Irascimini, et nolite peccare."—Ps. iv. 5. This would be right, if in such anger there were no fault on our part; but in this consists the difficulty. To leave oneself in the hand of anger, is a very dangerous thing: you might as well mount a furious horse that refuses to obey the bit, and carries you wheresoever he pleases. Hence St. Francis de Sales, in the devout life, (part 3, chapter 8.) says that however just the reason of our anger, it is always expedient to restrain it; and that it is better for you to have it said that you are never angry, than that you are wisely angry. When, says St. Augustine, anger has entered the soul, it is difficult to expel it. Hence he exhorts us in the beginning to close the gate, that anger may not enter.

4. When a person who is corrected, sees his superior in a passion, he will derive but little fruit from the admonition: he will regard it as the effect of anger, rather than of charity. A single admonition

given with sweetness and a tranquil countenance, will do more good than a thousand reproaches, however just, accompanied with motions or expressions of anger. But to be meek, does not imply that, in order to show kindness, or to avoid the displeasure of another, we should omit to correct him with just rigour, when such correction is necessary. To omit correction in that case, would not be virtue, but a culpable and abominable negligence. Wo, says the Prophet, to him who furnishes a pillow to sinners that they may peacefully sleep in their deadly slumber. "Wo to them that sew cushions under every elbow; and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age, to catch souls.....you have strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his evil way and live."—Ezech., xiii. 18 This vicious condescension, says St. Augustine, "non est charitas, sed languor." It is neither charity nor meekness, but it is negligence, and even cruelty, to the poor souls that thus remain in the state of damnation, without being admonished of their miserable condition. St. Cyprian says that when the sick man feels the knife, he assails the surgeon; but when he is cured, he will thank him: "Licet conqueratur æger impatiens per dolorem, gratias aget postmodum, cum senserit sanitatem."—De laps. Meekness, then, implies that when it is necessary to correct a brother, we should do it with firmness, but at the same time with sweetness. And when it is our duty to correct others, the apostle exhorts us first to consider our own defects, that we may have compassion for our neighbour as we have for ourselves. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Gal., vi. 1. Peter de Blois says that it is a great deordination in a superior, to correct an inferior with anger and asperity: "Turpe quidem est in prælato cum ira et acerbitate corrigere."—Epis. 100. Anger so disfigures the face, that it gives to the most beautiful countenance a horrible appearance. "Facies turbatior," says Seneca, "pulcherrima ora turbavit." In this matter, then,

we should always attend to the admonition of St. Gregory: "Sit amor, sed non molliens; sit rigor, sed non exaserans; sit pietas, sed non plusquam expediat parcens."—Lib. 20, mor. c. 8.

5. Physicians, says St. Basil, should not get angry with a patient, but should only assail his disease in order to restore his health. Cassian relates (coll. 2. c. 15.) that a young religious who was violently tempted against chastity, sought advice from an aged monk; but instead of assisting and encouraging him, the old man loaded him with reproaches. But what was the result? The Lord permitted the aged monk to be so violently attacked by the spirit of impurity, that he ran like a madman through the monastery. Having heard of his indiscretion towards the young man, the abbot went to him, and said: "Brother, know that God has permitted you to be molested by this temptation, that you may learn to take compassion on others." When, therefore, we witness the weaknesses and faults of others, we ought not to reprove them with a vain conceit of ourselves; but in applying, to the best of our ability, a remedy to their faults, we should be humble in our own estimation; otherwise God will permit us to fall into the very defects which we condemn in others. The same Cassian (lib. 5, de inst. ren., c. 30.) relates that a certain abbot, called Machete, confessed that he had miserably fallen into three faults of which he had before judged his brethren. Hence St. Augustine says, that compassion for our neighbour, and not indignation should precede correction: "Reprehensionem non odium sed misericordiam præcedat."—Lib. 2, serm. dom. cap. 20. And St. Gregory tells us that the consideration of our own defects will make us pity and excuse the faults of others: "Considerata infirmitas propria, aliena nobis excusat mala."—Lib. mor., cap. 34.

6. Thus to yield to anger, is never profitable to ourselves or to others. If it produce no other evil, it at least robs us of peace. Agrippinus the philosopher having once lost some of his goods, said: "If I have lost my property I will not lose my peace." The disturbance of mind to which we give way on account

of the maltreatment we receive from others, is more hurtful to us than the injuries offered to us. Seneca has said: "Plus mihi nocitura est ira quam injuria." He who indulges anger when an affront is offered to him, is a cause of pain to himself. "Jussisti Domine," says St. Augustine, "ut animus inordinatus sua sibi pœna sit."—Lib. 1, conf. c. 10. Hence that great master of meekness, St. Francis de Sales, teaches that it is necessary to practise meekness not only to others, but also to ourselves. After yielding to a fault, some are indignant with themselves, and give way to disquietude, and in this state of agitation, they commit a thousand faults. In troubled water, says St. Lewis Gonzaga, the devil always finds fish to catch. It is necessary, then, when we perceive that we have fallen into a defect, not to be disturbed (to give way to disquietude after a fault, is the effect of our own pride, and of the high opinion we had of our own virtue,) but to humble ourselves, to detest the sin with peace, and instantly to have recourse to God, hoping to receive from him help to avoid a relapse. In a word, they who are truly humble and meek, live always in peace, and in every occurrence preserve tranquillity of soul. "Discite ac me," says Jesus Christ, "quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris."—Mat., xi. 29. And before him, David said: "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace."—Ps. xxxvi. 11. "Nihil asperum mitibus, says St. Leo. No insult, no loss, no misfortune, disturbs the peace of a meek heart. And should we feel angry on any occasion, we must endeavour (according to the advice of the holy bishop of Geneva,) to repress passion without waiting to examine whether it is right or not to subdue it. And after a dispute, which may perhaps have disturbed our peace, let us observe the advice of the apostle: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil."—Eph., iv. 26. Let us first put our soul in peace, and then be reconciled to the person by whom we have been offended, lest through that spark, the devil should kindle in our souls a deadly flame which may cause our ruin.

7. Secondly, the virtue of meekness consists still more in bearing insults. Many, says St. Francis of Assisium, place their sanctification in saying many prayers, or in the practice of many corporal mortifications, but afterwards they cannot bear an offensive word. "Non intelligentes," says the saint, "quanto majus sit lucrum in tolerantia injuriarum." A soul gains more by peacefully bearing an affront, than by fasting for ten days on bread and water. St. Bernard says that there are three degrees of advancement, to which a soul that wishes to be a saint, ought to aspire. The first is not to wish for authority over others; the second, to wish to be subject to all; the third is to bear insults with peace: "Primus profectus et nolle dominari, secundus velle subjici, tertius injurias æquanimiter pati." You shall, for example, see that what is given to others is denied to you: what others say is heard with attention: what you say is received with derision: others are praised, are elected to office of honour, to transact business of importance: but you are despised: what you do is censured and ridiculed. You shall be truly humble, says St. Dorotheus, if you accept in peace all these humiliations, and recommend to God, as your best benefactors, all who treat you in this manner; for they thus cure your pride, which is a most malignant and deadly malady.

8. "In thy humiliation keep patience."—Eccl., ii. 4. Behold, then, what we must do: we must neither give way to anger nor to complaints, but accept insults as due to our sins. He who has offended God merits very different insults: he deserves to be cast under the feet of the devils. St. Francis Borgia was once obliged on a journey to sleep in the same bed with his companion. Father Bustamente, who laboured under asthma, and spent the whole night coughing and casting out phlegm. He thought that he was spitting towards the wall; but frequently the phlegm fell on the face of St. Francis. In the morning the father was greatly grieved at what he had done; but the saint placidly answered: "Father, be not troubled; for certainly in this room there is no place so fit for the reception of spittle, as my face."

The proud, because they esteem themselves worthy of all honour, convert the humiliations which they receive into an occasion of pride; but the humble, because they think themselves deserving of all ignominies, convert the insults offered to them into a source of humility. "Est humilis," says St. Bernard, "qui humiliationem convertit in humilitatem."—Serm. 24, in Cant. Rodriguez says that when reproved, the proud imitate the hedgehog, which when touched, becomes all thorns; that is, they get into a fury, and instantly break out into complaints, reproaches and detraction. But on the other hand, the humble when blamed for their conduct, humble themselves still more; confess that they are full of defects, thank the person who corrects them, and preserve tranquility of soul. He who is disturbed by correction, shows that in him pride still reigns. Hence they who are disquieted by correction or admonitions, must humble themselves more before God, and entreat him to deliver them from the hands of pride, which still lives in their hearts.

9. "My spikenard sent forth the odour thereof."—Cant., i. 11. The spikenard is a small odoriferous plant which sends forth its odours when bruised and twisted. Oh! what odours of sweetness does an humble soul give to God when she peacefully suffers insults, and delights in seeing herself despised and maltreated. Being asked what must be done in order to acquire true humility, Zachary, a monk, took his cowl, and trampling on it said: "He who delights in seeing himself treated in this manner, is truly humble." Father Alvares used to say that the time of humiliation is the time of getting rid of our miseries, and of acquiring great treasures of merit. God is as liberal of his gifts to the humble as he is sparing to the proud: "Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam."—Jac., iv. 6. St. Augustine says that a guilty conscience is not healed by praise, nor a good conscience wounded by insults: "Nec malam conscientiam sanat præconium laudantis, nec bonum vulnerat conviciantis opprobrium."—Lib. 3, contra Petilian. It was this that St. Francis of Assisum meant

when he said: "We are what we are before God." It is, then, of little importance to us whether we are praised or censured by men; it is enough for us to merit praise from God. And God will certainly bestow great praise on all who cheerfully bear insults from others for his sake.

10. The meek are dear to God and to men. St. John Chrysostom says, that there is nothing which gives greater edification to others, and draws souls more powerfully to God, than the meekness of the man who, when treated with derision, contempt, and insult, seeks not revenge, but bears all with a peaceful and placid countenance: "Nihil ita conciliat Domino familiares ut quod illum viderit mansuetudine jucundum. St. Ambrose writes that Moses was more beloved by the Hebrews on account of the meekness with which he received insults, than on account of the miracles which he wrought: "Plus eum pro mansuetudine diligerent quam pro factis admirarentur." —Lib. 2, Off. c. 7. The meek are useful to themselves and to others. "Mansuetus," says St. Chrysostom, "utilis sibi et aliis." Maffei relates that while a Jesuit was preaching in Japan, an insolent bystander spit in his face; the father wiped away the spittle, and continued the sermon as if nothing had happened. At the sight of such meekness, one of the audience was converted, and said that a religion which teaches such humility, must be true and divine. Thus, also, by the meekness and tranquillity with which he bore all the insults heaped upon him by the heretical ministers, St. Francis de Sales converted an immense number of heretics. Meekness is the touchstone of sanctity. St. Chrysostom says that the surest means knowing whether a soul has virtue, is to observe if she practises meekness under contradictions. In the history of Japan, Crasset relates that a certain Augustinian missionary who, in the time of the persecution, had changed his dress, received a buffet without resenting it. Seeing his meekness, the idolaters instantly supposed him to be a Christian, and laid hold of him; for said they, no one but a Christian could practise such virtue.

11. Ah! at the sight of Jesus loaded with contempt, it is easy to bear all insults. Standing one day before a crucifix, Blessed Mary of the Incarnation said to her religious: "O sisters, can it be possible, that we will not bear contempt, when we see a God so despised." On his journey to Rome to receive the crown of martyrdom, St. Ignatius Martyr, finding himself so maltreated by the soldiers, said: I now begin to be the servant of Christ: "Nunc incipio servus esse Christi." What can be expected from a Christian, if he is not able to bear contempt for Jesus Christ? It is indeed very painful to our pride to be despised and insulted, without seeking revenge, or even making a reply. But in doing violence to ourselves, consists our progress in perfection. "Tantum proficies," says St. Jerome, "quantum tibi vim intuleris." A holy nun, whenever she received an affront, was accustomed to go to the holy sacrament, and to say: "Lord, I am a poor miserable creature, I have nothing to present to you, but I offer this little gift, this insult which I have received." Oh! how lovingly does Jesus Christ embrace the soul that is despised! Oh! how soon does he console her and enrich her with his graces! Ah! the soul that truly loves Jesus Christ, not only bears insults in peace, but embraces them with pleasure and joy. The holy apostles "went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."—Acts, v. 41. St. Joseph Calasanctius used to say that in many are verified the last words of this passage—they are accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus, but not the first—*they went rejoicing*. But he who wishes to be a saint, must at least aspire to this degree of perfection. "Non est humilis," says the same saint, "qui non optat sperni." The venerable Lewis da Ponte did not at first understand how a man could rejoice in contempt; but when he afterwards attained higher perfection, he easily comprehended it, and experienced joy under insults. It was this that St. Ignatius of Loyola, coming from heaven, taught St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi: he said to her that true

humility consists in attaining such a state of mind as to feel a continual joy in all things, which can lead a person to self-contempt.

12. Worldlings do not rejoice as much in the honours which they receive, as the saints do in seeing themselves despised. Brother Juniper of the order of St. Francis, when treated with insult, held out his habit as if to receive precious gems. When St. John Francis Regis saw himself made an object of laughter, he not only rejoiced at the humiliation, but sought still more to excite derision. To St. John of the Cross the Redeemer once appeared, with a cross on his shoulders and a crown of thorns on his head, and said: "Joannes, pete quid vis a me." The saint answered: "Domine, pati et contemni pro te." As if he said: Lord, since I see you so afflicted and despised for my sake, what else can I ask but sufferings and contempt? To conclude, he who wishes to belong entirely to God, and to assimilate himself to Jesus Christ, must love to be unknown and disregarded. "Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari," was the great lesson of St. Bonaventure, which St. Philip Neri constantly inculcated to his spiritual children. Jesus Christ tells us to esteem ourselves happy, and to exult with joy when we are hated, cast off, and censured by men for his sake. He tells us that the more galling the insults which we shall accept with joy, the greater the reward which he will give us in heaven. "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."—Luke, vi. 22. And what greater joy can a soul feel than that which arises from seeing herself despised for the love of Jesus Christ? Then, says St. Peter, she obtains the greatest honour which it is possible for her to receive; for God then treats her as he has treated his own very Son. "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed, for that which is of the honour, glory, and power of God.....resteth upon you."—1 Peter, iv. 14.

EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

On Mortification, and particularly on Interior Mortification.

1. Man was created by God in a state of integrity, so that without a struggle the senses obeyed the spirit, and the spirit obeyed God: "Deus fecit hominem rectum."—Eccl., vii. 30. Sin came and deranged the beautiful order which God had established, and the life of man began to be a state of continual warfare: "Caro enim concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem."—Gal., v. 17. "Video autem," says the apostle in a tone of lamentation, "aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meæ, et captivantem me in lege peccati."—Rom., vii. 23. Hence, for man, there are two kinds of life: the life of the angels, who seek to do the will of God, and the life of beasts, who attend only to the indulgence of the senses. If a man labours to do the will of God, he becomes an angel; if he seek after sensual gratifications, he becomes a beast. Hence what the Lord prescribed to Jeremias ("constitui te hodie.....ut evellas et destruas.....ædifices et plantes."—Jer., i. 10,) we ought to do in ourselves; we should plant virtues, but we should first extirpate noxious weeds. Hence we must always carry in our hand the mattock of mortification, to cut down the evil desires which constantly spring up and bud forth within us, from the infected roots of concupiscence; otherwise the soul shall become a forest of vices. In a word, it is necessary to cleanse the heart, if we wish for light to know God, the sovereign Good: "Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt."—Mat., v. 8. Hence St. Augustine has said: "Si Deum videre vis, prius cogita de corde mundando."—Serm. 2, in Ascens. Isaias asks: "Whom shall he teach knowledge?.....Them that are weaned from the milk, that are drawn away from the breasts."—Isa., xxviii. 9. God gives the science of the saints, that is, the science of knowing and loving him, only to them that are weaned and drawn away from the breasts of the

world: "Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt spiritus Dei."—1 Cor., ii. 14. He who like a brute animal seeks after sensual pleasures, is not capable of even understanding the excellence of spiritual goods.

2. St. Francis de Sales says that as salt preserves flesh from corruption, so mortification preserves the soul from sin. In the soul in which mortification reigns, all virtues shall flourish. "Myrrh, and stacte, and cassia, perfume thy garments."—Ps. xliv. 9. On this passage Guerric the abbot, writes: "Si myrrha prima spirare cœperit consequentur et aliæ species aromaticæ."—Serm. 1, de annunt. This is precisely what the sacred spouse has said: "I have gathered my myrrh with my aramotical spices."—Cant., v. 1. All our sanctity and salvation consist in following the examples of Jesus Christ: "Quos præscivit et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis filii sui."—Rom., viii. 29. But we shall not be able to imitate Jesus Christ unless we deny ourselves, and embrace by mortification, the cross which he gives us to carry: "Qui vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam et sequantur me."—Mat., xvi. 24. The life of our Redeemer was all full of sufferings, of sorrows, and ignominies. Hence Isaias said of him, that he was "despised and the most abject of men: a man of sorrows."—liii. 3. As a mother takes nauseous medicine in order to cure the infant to which she gives suck, so our Redeemer, says St. Catherine of Sienna, wished to assume so many pains, in order to heal the infirmities of us poor sinners. But since Jesus Christ has endured so much for the love of us, it is but just that we suffer for his sake. We must, then, endeavour to follow the advice of St. Paul: "Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes, ut et vita Jesu manifestetur in corporibus nostris."—2 Cor., iv. 10. This we shall do, says St. Anselm in his comment on the preceding text, when, "in imitation of him, we assiduously practise mortification." To this we priests, who celebrate the mysteries of the passion of our Lord, are bound in a special manner. "Quia," says Hugo of

St. Victor, "passionis dominicæ mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus."

3. The principal means of acquiring sanctity are prayer and mortification, represented in the sacred scripture by incense and myrrh. "Who is this that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense."—Cant., iii. 6. The Holy Ghost adds, "and of all the powders of the perfumer," to show that prayer and mortification are followed by all virtues.—Prayer, then, and mortification, are necessary to render a soul holy; but mortification must precede prayer: "Vadam ad montem myrrhæ et ad collem thuris."—Cant., iv. 6. Thus our Lord invites us to follow him, first to the mountain of myrrh, and then to the hill of frankincense. St. Francis Borgia used to say, that prayer introduces divine love into the heart; but it is mortification that prepares a place for charity, by removing from the soul the world, which should otherwise prevent the entrance of love. Should a person go to a fountain for water with a vessel full of earth, he shall take back nothing but mire. He must first cast away the earth, and then fill the vessel with water. Father Baltassar Alvares used to say, that prayer without mortification, is either an illusion, or will be only of short duration. And St. Ignatius of Loyola has said that a mortified soul unites herself more intimately with God in a quarter of an hour's prayer, than an unmortified soul does in several hours. Hence, having once heard a person praised for his great spirit of prayer, the saint said: "It is a sign that he practises great mortification."

4. We have a soul and a body. External mortification is necessary, in order to mortify the disorderly appetites of the body; and interior mortification is necessary, in order to mortify the irregular affections of the soul. All this is comprised in the following words of the Saviour: "Qui vult post me venire abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me."—Mat., xvi. 24. External mortification is included in the words, "*tollat crucem suam;*" this species of mortification is necessary, as we shall see here-

after; but interior mortification is still more important and necessary, "*abneget semetipsum.*" This consists in subjecting to reason, the disorderly passions of the soul; such as ambition, inordinate anger, self-esteem attachment to self-interest, to our own opinion, or to self-will. "Duo sunt crucis genera, says St. Augustine, "unum corporale, alterum spirituale. Alterum est sublimius, scilicet regere motus animi."—Serm. 20, de sanctis. External mortification, then, represses the appetites of the body, in order to bring it under subjection to the spirit: the interior mortification restrains the affections of the heart, in order to subject them to reason and God: hence it has been called by the apostle, "Circumcisio cordis in spiritu."—Rom., ii. 29. In themselves, the passions are indifferent and not sinful; and when well regulated by reason, they are useful, because they contribute to the preservation of our existence. But when opposed to reason, they are the ruin of the soul. Miserable the soul that God leaves in the hands of her own desires! This is the greatest chastisement which he can inflict upon her. "I let them go according to the desires of their own hearts; they shall walk in their own inventions."—Ps. lxxx. 13. Hence we must always pray to the Lord, in the words of Solomon: "Give me not over to a shameful and foolish mind."—Eccl., xxiii. 6. My God, do not abandon me into the hands of my passions.

5. Our principal care, then, should be to conquer ourselves: "*Vince teipsum.*" St. Ignatius of Loyola, appeared not to consider any lesson more important than that which is contained in the words, "*Vince teipsum:*" his familiar discourses, were ordinarily on conquering self-love, and subduing self-will; and he would say, that out of a hundred persons who practise prayer, more than ninety are attached to their own opinion. He set a greater value on a single act of mortification of self-will, than on several hours spent in prayer, in the midst of spiritual consolations. To a brother, who separated from the company of the others, in order to get rid of a certain defect, the saint said, that he would have gained

more by a few acts of mortification in the society of his companions, than he would by remaining silent, in a cave, for an entire year. "Non est minimum," writes Thomas a Kempis, "in minimis seipsum relinquere." On the other hand, St. Peter Damian asserts, that unless he leaves himself, it will profit a man nothing to have forsaken all things: "Nihil prodest sine te ipso cætera reliquisse." Hence, to a person who wished to leave all things in order to give himself to God, St. Bernard said: "Qui relinquere universa disponis, te quoque inter relinquenda numerare memento."—Declam. cap. 1. Unless, adds the saint, you deny yourself, you shall never be able to be a follower of Jesus Christ: "Sane nisi abegaveris teipsum sequi Christum non potes. Our Redeemer "hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way."—Ps. xviii. 6. But, says the holy doctor, he who carries the weight of his passions, and of earthly affections, and wishes to follow the Saviour, shall not be able to keep within view of Jesus running the way: "Exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam, nec currentem sequi potest oneratus.

6. It is necessary, above all, to attend to the subjugation of the predominant passion. Some are careful to mortify themselves in many things, but make little efforts to conquer the passion to which they are most inclined; such persons can never advance in the way of God. He who allows any irregular passion to rule over him, is in great danger of being lost. But on the other hand, he who subdues the predominant passion, will easily conquer all his other passions. When the strongest enemy is vanquished, it is easy to defeat less powerful foes. The value and merit of the victory is greatest, when the greatest valour is required: for example, some are not avaricious of money, but are full of self-esteem; others are not ambitious of honours, but feel a great thirst for riches. Unless the former are careful to practice mortification, when treated with contempt, their disregard for riches will profit them but little. Unless the latter labour to mortify the desire of wealth, their contempt for honours will be but of little advantage to them. In a

word, a person gains most merit, and makes the greatest progress, when he uses the greatest violence to conquer himself. "Tantum proficies," says St. Jerome, "quantum tibi vim intuleris." St. Ignatius was naturally prone to anger, but by virtue, he became so meek, that he was considered to be a man of a mild disposition. St. Francis of Sales was, also, strongly inclined to anger; but, by the violence which he offered to himself, he became, as we read in his life, an example of patience and sweetness in the many contradictions and insults which he received. External mortification, without interior self-denial, profits the soul but little. Of what use, says St. Jerome, is it to reduce the body by fasting, and afterwards to swell with pride? or to abstain from wine, and to be inebriated with hatred? "Quid prodest tenuari abstinentia, si animus superbia intumescit? quid vinum non bibere, et odio inebriare?"—Ad Cel. The apostle says, that we must put off the old man, that is, attachment to self-love, and clothe ourselves with the new man, that is Jesus Christ, who never pleased himself. "Etenim," says St. Paul, "Christus non sibi placuit."—Rom., xv. 3. Hence, St. Bernard pitied certain monks who wore an humble dress, but interiorly cherished their passions: "Humilis habitus non sanctæ nativitatis est meritum, sed priscæ vetustatis operculum. Veterem hominem non exuerunt, sed palliant." They, says the saint, do not put off their vices; they only cover them with the exterior marks of penance. Hence, fasting, watching, hair-shirts, and disciplines, are of little or no use to him who is attached to himself, and to what belongs to him. They, says St. John Climacus, who wish to belong entirely to God, must divest themselves of attachment to four things in particular: to property, to honours, to relatives, and above all, to self-will.

7. First, it is necessary to remove attachment to property or to riches. St. Bernard says, that riches are a burden to him who possesses them, that they contaminate the man who loves them, and torture him who loses them; "Possessa onerant, amata inquinant, amissa cruciant."—Epis., 103. The priest

ought to remember, that when he entered the sanctuary, he declared, in the following words, that he wished for no other possessions than God: "Dominus pars hereditatis meæ.....tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi."—Ps., xv. 5. The ecclesiastic, then, says St. Peter Damian, who, after having chosen God for his portion, attends to the acquisition of riches, offers a great insult to his Creator: "Si igitur Deus portio ejus est, non levem creatori suo contumeliam videtur inferre qui æstuat pecuniam cumulare." Yes, for by his conduct, he shows that he consideres the Lord not sufficient to content his heart. St. Bernard says, and says truly that among the covetous, there is none more avaricious than the ecclesiastic who is attached to money: "Quis obsecro, avidius clericis quærit temporalia?"—Ad past. in Syn. How many priests are there, who, but for the miserable *honorarium* which they receive, would seldom say mass! Would to God that they never offered the holy sacrifice! They, as St. Augustine says, belong to that class of men who do not seek for money in order to serve God; but serve God in order to accumulate riches. What a disgrace, exclaims St. Jerome, to see a priest intent on the acquisition of wealth! "Ignominia est sacerdotis studere divitiis."

8. But let us pass by the disgrace, and examine the great danger of perdition, to which a priest, intent on heaping up riches, exposes his soul. "Ingenti periculo," says St. Hilary, "sunt sacerdotes qui occupantur in incrementis pecuniæ."—In Ps. 158. This the apostle has taught, saying, that such persons shall not only be molested by many cares, which impede their spritual progress, but shall also fall into temptations and desires, which will lead them to ruin. "They that will become rich, fall into temptations... ...and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which draw men into destruction and perdition."—1 Tim., vi. 9. And into what excesses, thefts, injustice, simony, and sacrileges, has the desire of money precipitated certain priests! St. Ambrose says: "Qui aurum redigit, gratiam prodigit." St. Paul assimilates avarice to idolatry: "Avarus quod est idolorum

cultus."—Ephes v. 5. And justly, for the covetous man makes money his God, that is, his last end. "Tolle pecuniarum studia," says St. Chrysostom, "et omnia mala sublata sunt."—Hom. 17, in 1, ad Tim. c. 6. If, then, we wish to possess God, let us remove all attachment to the goods of this world. St. Philip Neri used to say, that "he who seeks after riches, shall never become a saint." The riches of us who are priests, should consist, not in possessions, but in virtues; these will make us great in heaven, and give us strength on earth, against the enemies of our salvation. Such the language of St. Prosper: "Divitiæ nostræ sunt pudicitia, pietas, humilitas, mansuetudo; istæ ambiendæ sunt, quæ nos ornare possint pariter et munire."—Lib. 2, de vita Con. c. 13. Let us, says the Apostle, be content with moderate food for the support of life, and simple raiment to cover the body: let us labour to become saints, this alone is important to us: "Habentes..... alimenta et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus."—1 Tim., vi. 8. Of what use are earthly goods, which we must one day quit, and which never content the heart? Let us seek to acquire goods which shall accompany us to eternity, and make us happy for ever in heaven: "Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi ærugo et tinea demolitur.....Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cœlo."—Mat., vi. 19, 20. Hence, in the Council of Milan the following admonition was given to priests: "Thesaurizate non thesauros in terra, sed bonorum operum et animarum in cœlis."—Part 3. The treasures of a priest, should consist in good works, and in gaining souls to God.

9. Hence, in conformity with the words of the apostle, ("Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis sæcularibus ut ei placeat cui se probavit."—2 Tim. ii. 4.) the holy church prohibits, with so much rigour, and under pain of censure, ecclesiastics to engage in traffic. The priest is consecrated to God; he, therefore, should attend to no other business than the advancement of God's glory. The Lord does not accept empty victims from which the marrow has been extracted. "I will offer up to thee," said David,

"holocausts full of marrow."—Ps. lxv. 15. The sacrifices, the masses, offices, and work swhich a priest, dissipated by the cares of traffic, offers to God, are, says St. Peter Damian, empty; for he has taken away the marrow, that is, attention and devotion, and presents only the skin or external appearance: "Qui se per negotia sæcularia fundit, holocausti sui medullas subtahit et solum victimæ pellem Deo adolere contendit."—Apol., c. 12. What a misery to see a priest, who could save souls, and do great things for the glory of God, employed in buying and selling, and engaged in traffic of cattle and corn. "Magnis addictus es," says Peter de Blois, "noli minimis occupari." What, but a spider's web, says St. Bernard, is earthly traffic? "Fructus illorum quid nisi arraneorum tela."—Lib. 1, de Cons. c. 2. As the spider eviscerates itself, making its web for the purpose of catching a fly, so, oh! God, certain priests spend themselves, lose their time, and the fruit of their spiritual works, in order to gain a little dust. They submit to labour, to anxiety and disquietude, for emptiness, when they could possess God, who is the Lord of all things. "Cur nos affligimus," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "circa nihil, cum possidere creatorem valeamus"—Stim., p. 9, c. 2.

10. Some will say: but I act justly; I attend to this business without any scruple of conscience. I answer, first, that, as has been already said, ecclesiastics are forbidden to engage, even in a just traffic: hence, if they do not violate justice, they, at least, sin against the precept of the church. Besides, St. Bernard says: "Rivue qui fluit cavat terram: sic discursus temporalium conscientiam rodit."—Lib., 4, de cons. c. 6. As in their passage, the running waters eat away the banks of the river, so the cares of traffic gnaw the conscience, that is, they make us always fail in some duty. If, says St. Gregory, traffic were productive of no other evil, at least the crowd of worldly thoughts which it engenders, close the ear of the heart, and prevent it from hearing the divine inspirations: "Aurem cordis terrenarum turba, dum perstrepit, claudit."—Mor. lib. 23, c. 12. In a word,

St. Isidore writes: "Quanto se rerum studiis occupant, tanto a charitate divina se separant." It is true, that some are obliged, by charity, to attend to the affairs of their family; but, according to St. Gregory, this should be permitted only in cases of strict necessity: "Sæcularia negotia aliquando ex compassione toleranda sunt, nunquam vero ex amore requirenda."—Past., 2, c. 7. Some priests undertake, without necessity, the care of the concerns of their family, and even forbid relatives to interfere in them; but if they wished to attend to the affairs of their family, why have they become ministers of the family of God?

11. The priest who seeks to be employed in the courts of the great, also exposes his soul to very imminent danger. Peter de Blois says, that as the saints are saved through many tribulations, so, they who enter into courts, are lost through many tribulations: "Per multas tribulationes intrant justi in regnum cœlorum: hi autem per multas tribulationes promerentur infernum."—Epist., 14. It is very dangerous for a priest, to plead as an advocate in the courts of law. "In foro," says St. Ambrose," "Christus non reperitur."—De Virgin, c. 8. What fervour, I ask, can the priest have, who pleads in the courts? How can he say the office and mass with devotion, when the causes he has to defend, fill his whole mind and hinder him to think of God? The causes which a priest should advocate, are the causes of poor sinners; and these he should seek to deliver from the hands of the devil, and from eternal death, by sermons, by hearing confessions, or at least, by admonitions and prayers. A priest should abstain from pleading, not only for others, but also for himself. Every temporal law-suit is a seminary of cares and disquietudes, of rancour and sins. Hence, we read in the Gospel: "Et qui vult tecum judicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium."—Mat. v. 40. We know that this is only a counsel; but let us, at least, avoid suits which are but of trifling importance. You may get rid of temporal misery, you may gain a victory, but you shall suffer a

great loss of fervour and peace. "Perde aliquid," says St. Augustine, "ut Deo vaces, non litibus. Perde nummos, ut emas quietem."—Serm., 24, de verb. Apost. St. Francis de Sales has said, (Epist. 30,) that to go to law, and not yield to folly, is scarcely given to the saints. Hence, St. Chrysostom condemned all who engaged in litigation: "Hinc te condemno quod judicio contendis."—Hom. 16, in 1, cap. 6.

12. What shall we say of gaming? According to the Canons, it is certain, that to play frequently, and for a long time, at games of mere hazard, or for a large sum, at least, when it is accompanied with scandal to others, is a mortal sin. With regard to other games, which are called games of amusement, I will not here discuss the question, whether they are lawful or unlawful; but I say, that such amusements are but little suited to a minister of God, who, if he wishes, to fulfil his obligation to himself and his neighbour, has, certainly, no superfluous time to spend in gaming. I read, that St. John Chrysostom says: "Diabolus est qui in artem lusos digessit." I find that St. Ambrose writes: "Non solum profusos, sed omnes jocos declinandos arbitror."—Lib. 1, de Offic. c. 23. In the same place, he says, that recreation is lawful; but not the recreations which derange regularity of life, or which are not suited to one's state. Hence he adds: "Licet interdum honesta joca sint, tamen ab ecclesiastica abhorrent regula."

13. Secondly, a priest should divest himself of attachment to worldly honours. Peter de Blois says, that the ambition of honours is the ruin of souls: "Anima subversio est ambitio." For, ambition disturbs regularity of life, and injures charity towards God. Ambition, as the same author says, (Ep. 14,) pretends to resemble charity, and is quite opposed to it. Charity suffers all things but for the attainment of eternal goods: ambition bears all things: "Omnia patitur sed pro caducis." Charity is all benignity to the poor, but ambition is kind to the rich. Charity bears all in order to please God; ambition submits to all evils for the sake of vanity. Charity believes, and

hopes, for all that appertains to eternal glory; ambition believes all thing, hopes for all things, which tend to the glory of this life. Oh! to how many thorns, fears, censures, refusals, and insults must the ambitious submit, in order to attain a dignity, an office of honour! "In honorum cupiditate quantæ spinæ!" says St. Augustine (in Ps. 102.) And in the end, what do the ambitious gain, but a little smoke, which, when enjoyed, does not content the heart, and speedily disappears: "Vidi impium superexaltatum et elevatum sicut cedros Libani: transivi et ecce non erat."—Ps., xxxvi. 35, 36. Besides, the Scripture says, that to him who seeks it, honour becomes an occasion of disgrace: "Stultorum exaltatio ignominia."—Prov., iii. 35. And, according to St. Bernard, the greater the honour, the more the unworthy possessor, who has procured it by his own exertions, is despised by others: "Eo deformior quo illustrior." For the more exalted the dignity, the more clearly the man who is unfit for it, shows his unworthiness by seeking to obtain it: "Claras suas maculas reddit."—Cassiod. l. 12, ep. 12.

14. Add to this, the great dangers of eternal salvation, which arise from offices of honour. Father Vincent Carafa, once visited a sick friend, who had just been appointed to a situation of great emolument, but also of great danger. The sick man entreated the Father to obtain, from God, the restoration of his health; but Carafa answered: no, my friend, God forbid that I should violate the love which I bear you: your sickness is a grace from the Lord, who wishes to save you, by sending death, now that your soul is in a good state. Perhaps you might not be in such a state hereafter, should you enter on the office which has been given you. The friend died, and died full of consolation. We should have a special fear of all offices to which the care of souls is annexed. St. Augustine said, that many envied his elevation to the episcopacy, but he was afflicted at it, on account of the danger to which is exposed his salvation: "Invident nos; ibi nos felices putant vbi periclitamur."—Serm., 63, de verb. Dom. St. John Chrysostom,

when made bishop, was so much terrified, that, as he afterwards said, he felt as if his soul were separating from the body: he had great doubts about the salvation of a pastor of souls: "Miror an fieri possit ut aliquis ex rectoribus salvus fiat." But, if the saints, forced against their will, to become prelates, tremble for the account which they must render to God, how should he tremble who intrudes himself into an office, to which is annexed the care of souls? "Mensura honoris," says St. Ambrose, "mensura debet esse gestantis, alioquin oneris fit ruinæ, ubi actoris infirmitas est."—Lib. de Viduis. A weak man, who puts on his back a great weight, shall not be able to carry it, but shall be oppressed by it. St. Anselm says, that he who wishes to obtain ecclesiastical honours, "*per fas aut nefas*," does not receive them, but takes them by force: "Qui honores ecclesiasticos accipere cupit, non sumit sed rapinam facit."—In cler. St. Bernard says the same: "Vineis dominicis se ingerentes fures sunt non cultores."—Serm., 28, in Cant. This is conformable to the words of Osee: "Ipsi regnaverunt et non ex me."—Os., viii. 4. Hence it happens, as St. Leo says, that the church, which is governed by such ambitious ministers, is neither served nor honoured, but despised and defiled: "Corpus ecclesiæ ambientium contentione fœdatur." Let us, then, attend to the beautiful lesson of Jesus Christ: "Recumbe in novissimo loco."—Luc., xiv. 10. He who sits on the ground, is not afraid of falling. We are ashes: "Cineri expedit," says the angelic doctor, "ne in alto sit, ne disperdatur a vento."—Lib. 1, c. 1, de reg. princ. Happy the priest who can say: "Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum."—Ps., lxxiii. 11.

15. Thirdly, a priest must divest himself of attachment to relatives. "Si quis," says Jesus Christ, ".....non odit patrem suum et matrem.....non potest meus esse discipulus."—Luc., xiv. 26. But how are we to hate relatives? We must, says a learned author, disown them in whatever is opposed to our spiritual advancement: "Si prohibeant ne vitam

secundum ecclesiasticæ disciplinæ normam instituamus, si negotiis sæcularibus nos implicent, tunc eos, tanquam adversarios odisse et fugere tenemur."—Abelly sac. Christ., p. 4, c. 6. And before him, St. Gregory said: "Quos adversarios in via Dei patimur, odiendo et fugiendo nesciamus."—Hom. 37, in Evang. Peter de Blois writes: "Non eligitur sacerdos, nisi qui dixerit, patri suo et matri suæ, nescio vos."—Ep. 123. St. Ambrose says that he who wishes to serve God ought to deny his relatives: "Suis se abneget, qui servire Deo gestit."—De fuga sæc., cap. 2. We should honour parents, but we must first obey God. "Honorandus est pater," says St. Augustine, "sed obediendum est Deo."—De verb. Dom., serm. 7, c. 2. To show great kindness to relatives, and not to obey God, is, according to St. Jerome, not piety but impiety: "Grandis in suos pietas, impietas in Deum est." Ep. 15. Our Redeemer has declared that he came on earth to detach us from relations. "I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother," &c.—Mat., x. 35. And why? Because in spiritual concerns relatives are our greatest enemies: "Inimici hominis domestici ejus."—Verse 36. Hence St. Basil exhorts us to avoid, as a temptation of the devil, the care of the property of relatives. What a misery to see a priest who could save numberless souls, altogether occupied in transacting the business of his family, and in attending to the management of farms, flocks of sheep, and the like? What! exclaims St. Jerome, must a priest abandon the service of the Father of heaven, to please an earthly parent? "Propter patrem militiam Patris deseram?"—Epist. ad Heliod. The saint says that when there is question of serving God, a son (if it be necessary,) should trample on his father: "Quid facies in paterna domo delicate miles? Ubi vallum? Ubi fossa? Licet in limine pater jacet, per calcatum perge patrem, siccis oculis ad vexillum crucis avola. Solum pietatis genus est in hac re esse crudelem."—Loco cit.

16. St. Angustine relates that St. Anthony having received a letter from his relatives, threw it into the

fire, saying: "Comburo vos, ne comburar a vobis." According to St. Gregory, he who wishes to be united with God, must detach himself from relatives: "Extra cognatos quisque debet fieri, si vult parenti omnium jungi."—Mor., lib. 7, cap. 14. Otherwise, as Peter de Blois says, the love of flesh and blood will soon deprive us of the love of God. "Carnalis amor extra Dei amorem cito te capiet."—Epist. 134. It is difficult to find Jesus Christ in the midst of relatives. "Quomodo te bone Jesu," says St. Bonaventure, "inter meos cognatos inveniam, qui inter tuos minime es inventus?"—Spec., p. 1, cap. 23. When the divine mother, after having found Jesus in the temple, said to him: "Son, why hast thou done so to us?" the Redeemer answered: "How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"—Luke, ii. 49. Such should be the answer of a priest to his relatives when they wish to charge him with the care of his family. I am a priest; I can attend only to the things of God; to you who are seculars, it belongs to mind the things of the world. It was this our Lord wished to signify to the young man whom he called to follow him, when in answer to the young man's request to be permitted to bury his father, he said: "Let the dead bury the dead."—Mat., viii. 22.

17. It is necessary, above all, to remove attachment to self-will. St. Philip Neri used to say, that sanctity consists in the mortification of self-will. Blosius has asserted that he who mortifies self-will, does an act more pleasing to God than if he gave life to the dead: "Acceptius Deo obsequium præstat homo mortificans suam voluntatem quam si mortuos ad vitam revocaret." Hence many priests and pastors, and even bishops, who led exemplary lives, and devoted their time and labour to the salvation of souls, not content with all this, have entered religion in order to live under obedience to others; believing (what is really the truth,) that they could not offer to God a sacrifice more acceptable than the renunciation of their own will. All are not called to the religious state; but he who wishes to walk in the way of

perfection, (besides the obedience due to his prelate,) must submit his will to the direction of at least a spiritual father, who will guide him in all his spiritual exercises, and also in temporal affairs of importance, which are connected with the sanctification of his soul. What is done through self-will, is of little or no advantage to the soul: "In die jejunii.....invenitur voluntas vestra."—Isa., lviii. 3. Hence St. Bernard has written: "Grande malum propria voluntas, qua fit ut bona tua tibi bona non sint." The greatest enemy we have is self-will. "Cesset propria voluntas," says the same St. Bernard, "et infernus non erit."—Serm. 3, de resurr. Hell is full of self-wills. What but our own will is the cause of our sins? St. Augustine confessed of himself that he was impelled by grace to forsake sin, but he remained in it, bound by no other chain than that of his own will: "Ligatus non ferro alieno sed mea ferrea voluntate." St. Bernard teaches that self-will is so opposed to God, that were his destruction possible, it would destroy him: "Quantum in seipsa est, Deum perimit propria voluntas."—De dil. Deo, c. 16. He, says the same saint, who becomes his own disciple, becomes the disciple of a fool: "Qui se sibi magistrum constituit stulto se discipulum subdit."

18. It is necessary to understand that all our good consists in an union with the divine will: "Et vita in volumtate ejus."—Ps. xxix. 6. But, ordinarily speaking, God makes his will known to us only through our superiors, that is, through our prelate or director. "Qui vos audit, me audit," says Jesus Christ; (Lucæ, x. 16.) and he adds: "qui vos spernit me spernit." Hence, in the scripture, not to submit to the authority of superiors, is called a species of idolatry: "Quasi scelus idololatriæ nolle acquiescere."—1 Reg., xv. 23. But, on the other hand, St. Bernard assures us, that in whatever our spiritual father directs us, unless it be certainly sinful, we should feel as secure as if God himself had spoken to us. Happy he who can say at death, with the Abbot John, "Nunquam meam fieci voluntatem; nec quemquam docui quod prius non feci." Hence Cassian, who re-

lates this fact, has written that by the mortification of self-will, all vices are destroyed: "Mortificatione voluntatum marcescunt vitia universa."—Lib. 5, de inst., lib. 4, cap. 43. And before him the Wise Man said: "Vir obediens loquitur victorias."—Prov., xxi. 28. And in another place: "Melior est.....obedientia quam victimæ."—1 Reg., xv. 22. For he who offers to God the sacrifice of alms, fasts, penitential works, sacrifices to him only a part of himself; but he who gives God his will by subjecting it to obedience, gives all that he is able to give, and can say to him: Lord, having given you my will, I have nothing more to give you. Hence St. Laurence Justinian has written, that they who offer the sacrifice of self-will to God, shall obtain from him whatever they ask: "Qui se Deo tradidit, voluntatem propriam immolando, omne quod poposcerit consequetur." And God himself has promised those who renounce self-will, that he will raise them above the earth, and make them celestial men. "If thou turn away thy foot.....from doing thy own will.....I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth."—Isa., lviii. 13, 14.

19. The means of conquering self-will and of subduing all irregular passions, are the following. The first is prayer: he who prays, obtains all graces. "Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest," says St. Bonaventure. And before him, Jesus Christ said: "Quodcumque volueritis petetis et fiet vobis."—Joan., xv. 7. The second means is to do violence to self with a determined will. A resolute will surmounts all difficulties. The third is to make our examen on the passion which molests us, and to impose a penance on ourselves as often as we yield to it. The fourth is not to indulge in a multitude of desires: "I," said St. Francis Xavier, "desire but few things, and my desire for them is not strong." The fifth is to practise mortification in small things, and even in things that are not sinful; for thus we shall acquire a facility of overcoming great difficulties. For example, by abstaining from certain jests, by not indulging curiosity, not pulling a flower, not opening letters for some time after we receive them, by giving up

certain undertakings, making a sacrifice of them to God, regardless of the honour which they might procure for us. What advantage do we now derive from so many gratifications? from so many successful undertakings? Had we been mortified on such occasions, how many merits should we now have treasured up before God. Henceforth let us labour to gain something for eternity. Let us reflect that we are drawing near the grave. The more we mortify ourselves the less we shall suffer in purgatory, and the greater the glory which we shall merit for eternity in heaven. On this earth we are only in passage: we shall soon be in eternity. I conclude with the words of St. Philip Neri: "Foolish is the man who does not become a saint."

NINTH INSTRUCTION.

On External Mortification.

1. St. Gregory says that no man is fit to be a minister of God, and to offer the sacrifice of the altar, unless he has first sacrificed himself entirely to God: "Nullus Deo et sacrificio dignus est nisi qui prius se viventem hostiam exhibuerit."—Orat. 1. And St. Ambrose writes: "Hoc est sacrificium primitivum, quando quisque se offert, ut postea munus suum possit offerre."—Lib. 2, de Abel., c. 6. And long before, the Redeemer said; "Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet."—Joan., xii. 24, 25. He, then, who wishes to bring forth fruits of eternal life, must die to himself; that is, he must desire nothing for his own satisfaction, and, as St. Gregory has written, he must embrace all that is mortifying to the flesh: "Nihil quod caro blanditur libeat; nihil quod carnalem vitam trucidat spiritus perhorrescat."—Hom. 12. in Evang. He who is dead to himself, must, according to Lanspergius, live in the world as if he saw nothing, heard nothing;

as if nothing disturbed, and as if nothing gave him content but God. "For," says Jesus Christ, "he that will save his life shall lose it."—Mat., xvi. 25. Happy loss, exclaims St. Hilary, when every thing in this world, and even life itself, is lost in order to follow Jesus Christ, and to gain eternal glory: "Jactura felix! Contemptus universorum, Christus sequendus, et æternitas comparanda." St. Bernard says that were there no other reason for giving ourselves entirely to God, it would be enough to know that God has given himself entirely to us: "Integrum te da illi quia ille, ut te salvaret, integrum se tradidit."—De modo bene viv., serm. 8. But to give ourselves to God without reserve, it is necessary to banish from the heart every earthly desire. "Augmentum charitatis," says St. Augustine, "diminutio cupiditatis; perfectio, nulla cupiditas."—Lib. 83, quæst. 36. He who least desires the goods of the earth, loves God most; he who desires nothing, loves God perfectly.

2. In the preceding instruction we have spoken of interior mortification; we shall now speak of external mortification, or the mortification of the senses. This species of mortification is also necessary, because on account of sin, our flesh wars, as the apostle said of himself, against reason, and is an enemy to our salvation: "Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meæ."—Rom., vii. 23. "Id est," says St. Thomas in his comment on this passage, "concupiscentia carnis contrarians rationi." It is necessary to understand that the soul must bring the body under subjection, or the body will trample on the soul. God has given us senses that we employ them, not as we please, but as he directs; hence we must mortify the desires that are contrary to the divine law: "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."—Gal. v. 24. Hence the saints have been so careful to macerate the flesh. St. Peter of Alcantara purposed never to give any indulgence to the body, and observed his resolution till death. St. Bernard maltreated his body to such a degree, that at death he asked its par-

don. St. Teresa used to say that "it would be silliness to imagine that God admits to his friendship persons who seeks their own ease and convenience; and in another place, she says: "souls that truly love God, cannot ask for comforts." And St. Ambrose has written that he who does not cease to indulge the body, shall cease to please God: "Qui non peregrinantur a corpore, peregrinantur a Domino."—Lib. 7, in Luc. According to St. Augustine, he who subjects reason to the flesh, is a monster that walks with his head downwards and his feet upwards: "Inversis pedibus ambulat." We are born for a more noble end than to be the slaves of the body. "Ad majora natus sum," said the pagan Seneca, "quam ut sim mancipium corporis mei." How much more should we say it, who know by faith that we have been created to enjoy God for eternity? St. Gregory says that by gratifying the desires of the flesh, we only nourish enemies: "Dum carni parcimus, contra nos hostes nutrimus."—Ap. S. Bon., p. 2, c. 12.

3. St. Ambrose weeps over the misfortune of Solomon saying that this unhappy king had the glory of building the temple of God, but that it would have been far better for him to preserve to God the temple of his body, for the gratification of which he lost his body, his soul, and his God: "Salomon templum Dei condidit: sed utinam corporis sui templum servasset." Ap. 2, Dav., c. 3, A man mounted on a furious horse, must always keep the reins tight: it is thus we must treat the body. St. Bernard says that we ought to treat the flesh as a physician treats a patient who seeks what is noxious and refuses what is conducive to health. Were a physician, in order to please a sick man, to give him what should cause his death, would he not be guilty of cruelty? And in like manner, let us be persuaded that to indulge the body is not charity, but the greatest act of cruelty we can commit against ourselves; because, for a momentary indulgence of the flesh, we condemn the soul to an eternity of torments. Such the language of St. Bernard: "Ista charitas destruit charitatem, talis misericordia crudelitate plena est; quia corpori

servitur ut anima juguletur."—In Apolog. ad Guill. ab. In a word, we must change our palate, and follow the admonition of our Lord to St. Francis: "If you desire me, take bitters for sweets, and sweets for bitters."

4. Let us now attend to the fruits of external mortification. First, it satisfies for the pains due to the pleasures in which we have indulged: these pains are far milder in this than in the next life. St. Antonine relates that an angel proposed to a sick man, the choice of remaining three days in purgatory, or of being confined for two years to his bed by the infirmity under which he laboured. The sick man chose the three days in purgatory; but he was scarcely an hour there when he began to complain to the angel that his purgatory, instead of continuing for three days, had lasted for several years. What; replied the angel, your body is still warm on the bed of death, and you speak of years! "Non vis castigari?" says St. Chrysostom, "sis judex tui ipsius, te reprehende et corrige." Secondly, mortification detaches the soul from earthly pleasures, and gives her a facility of flying to God, and of uniting herself with him. St. Francis de Sales used to say that "if the flesh is not mortified and depressed, the soul will never be able to raise herself up to God," St. Jerome has said the same: "Anima in cœlestia non surgit, nisi in mortificatione membrorum."—In cap. 6. ad Ephes. Thirdly, penance merits for us eternal goods, as St. Peter of Alcantara revealed from heaven to St. Teresa, saying: "O felix pœnitentia puæ tantam mihi promeruit gloriam! Hence the saints have endeavoured to mortify the flesh continually, and to the best of their ability. St. Francis Borgia said that he would die without consolation on any day on which he had not mortified his body by some penitential work. A life of ease and pleasure on this earth, cannot be the life of a Christian.

5. If we have not fervour to mortify the body by great penances, let us at least practise some little mortifications; let us bear with patience the pains which happens to us. For example, let us submit in

peace to the inconvenience, the want of sleep, the disagreeable smell which we feel in attending the dying, to the annoyance we experience in going to hear the confessions of persons confined in prison, in hearing the confessions of the poor and the ignorant, and to similiar occasions of pain or trouble. Let us, at least, deprive ourselves from time to time of some lawful pleasure. Clement of Alexandria says: "Cito facient quæ non licent qui faciunt omnia quæ licent." —Pædagog., lib. 1, cap. 1. He who wishes to indulge in all gratifications which are in themselves lawful, shall not abstain long from unlawful pleasures. That great servant of God, Vincent Carafa, of the society of Jesus, used to say that God has given us earthly goods not only for our delight, but also that we might have a means of showing our gratitude to him by abstaining from pleasures, and giving him back his own gifts in proof of our love; for, as St. Gregory writes, he who is accustomed to renounce lawful gratifications easily abstains from forbidden pleasures.

6. Let us speak of the mortifications of the senses which we can practise, and especially of the mortifications of the eyes, the taste, and the touch. First, it is necessary to mortify the eyes. "Per oculos," says St. Bernard, "intrat ad mentem sagitta amoris." —Serm. 13. The first darts which wound, and sometimes kill, the chaste soul, enter through the eyes: "Oculus meus depredatus est animam meam."—Thren., iii. 51. By means of the eyes, bad thoughts spring up in the mind. "What is not seen," says St. Francis de Sales, "is not desired." Hence the devil first tempts a person to look, then to desire, and afterwards to consent. Thus he acted with the Saviour himself: "Ostendit ei omnia regna mundi." He then tempted him, saying: "Hæc omnia tibi dabo, si cadent adoraveris me."—Mat., iv. 8, 9. The evil spirit gained nothing by tempting Jesus Christ, but by thus tempting Eve, he gained a great deal: "She saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes.....and she took of the fruit thereof," &c.—Gen., iii. 6. Tertullian says that certain little glances are the beginnings of the greatest iniquities. "Exordia sunt maxi-

marum iniquitatem." And St. Jerome compares the eyes to certain hooks, which drag us, as it were, by force to sin: "Oculi quasi quidam raptores ad culpam." —In c. 3, Thren. He who wishes not to admit the enemy into the fortress, should lock the gate. The Abbot Pastor was molested by bad thoughts for forty years after having looked at a female. In consequence of having seen a woman in the world, St. Benedict was afterwards so strongly tempted, that to conquer the flesh he threw himself naked among thorns, and thus overcame the temptations. While he lived in the cave of Bethlehem, St. Jerome was for a long time troubled with bad thoughts, on account of having formerly seen certain females in Rome. These saints conquered temptations by the divine aid, by prayers and penitential works; but many others, on account of the eyes, have miserably fallen. On account of the eyes a David fell; on account of the eyes a Solomon fell. Listen to an alarming fact related by St. Augustine of Alipius. He went to the theatre, resolved not to look at any dangerous object, saying, *adero absens;* but being tempted to look, he says the saint, not only prevaricated, but also made others prevaricate: "Spectavavit, clamavit, exarsit, abstulit inde insaniam."

7. Seneca justly said, that blindness is a great help to preserve innocence: "Pars innocentiæ cæcitas." It is not lawful to pull out our eyes, but we ought to make ourselves blind by closing the eyes, and by not looking at objects which may impel us to evil: "Qui claudit oculos suos ne videat malum.....iste in excelso habitabit."—Isa., xxxiii. 15, 16. Hence Job said, that he had made a covenant with his eyes never to look at a woman, lest he should be afterwards molested by bad thoughts: "Pepigi fœdus cum oculis mei ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine."—Job., xxxi. 1. St. Lewis Gonzaga never dared to raise his eyes to look at his mother. St. Peter of Alcantara abstained from looking even at his brothers in religion; he knew them not by the sight, but by the voice. The Council of Tours tells priests that they should guard against every thing that can offend the eyes or the ears:

"Dei sacerdotes abstinere debent ab omnibus quæ ad aurium et oculorum pertinent illecebras."—Anno 811, can. 7. But particular caution is necessary for secular priests, who frequent public places, or the houses of seculars. If they permit the eye to look at every object which is presented to them, they shall scarcely preserve chastity. "Turn away thy face," says the Holy Ghost, "from a woman dressed up..... for many have perished by the beauty of a woman."—Eccl., ix. 8, 9. And, says St. Augustine, should the eyes happen sometimes to fall on a female, let us take care never to fix them on any woman: "Etsi oculi nostri jaciantur in aliquam, defigantur in nulla."—In Reg., 3 cap. 21. Hence it is necessary to abstain from going to balls, or profane comedies, which are frequented by men and women; and when through necessity a priest is obliged to go to a place in which there are females, he must pay special attention to modesty of the eyes. Father Alvares once assisted at a public degradation of a priest, but because there were females present, he held in his hand an image of the Blessed Virgin, on which he kept his eyes constantly fixed for several hours, lest they might fall on a woman. From the moment we awake in the morning, let us pray with David: "Averte oculos meos ne videant vanitatem."—Ps. cxviii. 37.

8. Oh! how profitable is it to us ecclesiastics, and how edifying to others, to keep the eyes cast down! St. Francis once said to his companion, that he wished to go out in order to preach a sermon; he went out and walked through the village with his eyes fixed on the ground. After they had returned, his companion asked when he intended to preach the sermon. The saint replied: we have already preached by the modesty with which we walked before the people. A certain author remarks that the evangelists, in order to show that he ordinarily kept them cast down, mention in several places that our Redeemer raised his eyes: "Elevatis oculis in discipulos."—Luc., vi. 20. "Cum sublevasset oculos Jesus."—Joan., vi. 5. Hence St. Paul has praised the modesty of Jesus Christ, saying: "Obsecro vos per mansuetudinem et

modestiam Christi."—2 Cor., x. 1. St. Basil says that we should keep the eyes cast down upon the earth and the soul raised up to heaven: "Oportet oculos habere ad terram dejectos animum vero ad cœlum erectum."—Serm. de Ascens., 20. And St. Jerome has written, that the countenance is the mirror of the soul, and that chaste eyes indicate a chaste heart: "Speculum mentis est facies, et tacite oculis cordis fatentur arcana."—Epist. 10. But, on the other hand, St. Augustine says: "Impudicus oculus impudici cordis est nuntius."—32. Quæst. 5. St. Ambrose adds, that the motions of the body show the recollection or dissipation of the soul: "Vox animi corporis motus."—1. Off., c. 18. Hence the saint relates that he forboded the fall of two men on account of the irregularity of their gait. The prediction was verified: for one fell into impiety, and the other into heresy. Speaking especially of men whose character is sacred, St. Jerome says that their actions, language, and gesture, are a lesson for seculars: "Quorum habitus, sermo, vultus, incessus doctrina est.

9. The Council of Trent has said: "Sic decere omnino clericos vitam componere ut habitu, gestu, incessu, nihil nisi grave ac religione plenum præseferant."—Sess. 22, c. 1. And St. Chrysostom has written: "Sacerdos animo splendescere oportet, ut illustrare possit qui oculos in eum convertunt."—De Sacerd. lib. 3, cap. 12. Thus, the priest ought to give, to all, an example of modesty in all things; modesty in looks, modesty in his gait, modesty in his conversation, particularly by saying little, and by speaking as a priest ought to speak. By saying little.—He who speaks much to men, shows that he converses but little with God. Men of prayer are men of few words. When the mouth of the furnace is opened, the heat rushes out, "In silentio," says Thomas a Kempis, "proficit anima." And St. Peter Damian calls silence, the guardian of justice: "Custos justitiæ silentium." We read in Isaias: "In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra."—Isa., xxx. 15. In silence consists our strength, for in speaking much there is always some defect. "In multiloquio," says Solomon, "non deerit pecca-

tum."—Prov., x. 19. By speaking as a priest ought to speak.—St. Anselm says: "Os tuum os Christi: non debes, non dico ad detractiones, ad mendacia, sed nec ad otiosos sermones os aperire."—Med., 1, s. 5. He who loves God, seeks to speak always of God. He who loves a fellow-man, can scarcely speak of anything else than of him. "Memento," says Gilbert, "os tuum cœlestibus oraculis consecratum, sacrilegium puta, si quid non divinum sonet."—Serm, 18, in Cant. It is, according to St. Ambrose, a violation of modesty to speak in a very loud tone: "Vocis sonum liberet modestia, ne cujusquam offendat aurem vox fortior."—Lib. 1, off. cap. 18. It belongs to modesty to abstain, not only from immodest words, but also from listening to them: "Sæpi aures tuas spinis, linguan nequam noli audire."—Eccl., xxviii. 28. A priest should be modest, also, in his dress. St. Augustine says, that in order to appear well dressed exteriorly, some strip themselves of interior modesty: "Ut foris vestiaris intus expoliaris."—Serm. 50, de temp. Vanity, and costliness of dress in a priest, show that there is but little virtue in the soul. St. Bernard writes: "Clamant nudi et dicunt: nostrum est quod effunditis: nostris necessitibus detrahitur quidquid accedit vanitatibus vestris."—Ep. ad Henric. In the 16th Canon of the second Council of Nice, we read: "Virum sacerdotalem cum moderato indumento versari debere: et quidquid non propter usum, sed ostentatorium ornatum assumitur, in nequitiæ reprehensionem incurrere." The priest ought to be modest in his hair. Pope Martin ordained, that ecclesiastics should not minister in the church, unless their head was shorn so that the ears would be visible: "Nisi attonso capite, patentibus auribus." What shall we say of those, whom Clement of Alexandria, calls "illiberales tonsos," that is, persons who are so much attached to their hair, that they allow it to be cut only sparingly. What a shame, says St. Cyprian, for an ecclesiastic to appear with his head decked out like the head of a woman: "Capillis muliebribus in fœminum transfiguratus!" And before him, the apostle, in his epistle to the Corinthians, said, that to

nourish the hair is, as disgraceful in a man, as it is becoming in a woman: "Vir quidem, si comam nutriat, ignominia est illi."—1 Cor., xi. 14. And this he said of all, even of seculars. What, then, must we think of the ecclesiastic, who curls his hair, and arranges it in a worldly fashion? Minutius Felix says, that we ought to show ourselves to be ecclesiastics, not by the ornaments of the body, but by examples of modesty: "Nos non notaculo corporis, sed modestiæ signo facile dignoscimur."—In Octavio. St. Ambrose has written, that the deportment of a priest should be such, that all who behold him, may be inspired with reverence for God, whose priest and minister he is: "Decet actuum nostrorum esse publicam æstimationem, ut qui videt ministrum altaris Dominum veneretur, qui tales sacerdotes habeat."—Lib. 1, de off. ei ult. But, on the other hand, a priest who violates modesty, excites irreverence towards God.

10. We shall now speak on the mortification of the taste, or of the appetite. In his treatise, entitled *The One Thing Necessary*, Father Rogacci says, that the principal part of external mortification consists in the mortification of the appetite. Hence St. Andrew Avellino used to say, that he who wishes to walk in the way of perfection, must begin to mortify the taste. St. Leo asserts, that this has been the practice of the saints: "Tyrocinium militiæ christianæ sanctis jejuniis inchoarunt."—Serm., 1. in Pent. To a penitent who practised but little mortification, St. Philip Neri said, "My son, unless you mortify the appetite, you shall never become a saint." St. Francis Xavier used to eat nothing but a few grains of toasted rice. St. John Francis Regis took only a little coarse flower boiled in water. St. John Francis Borgia, even when a secular, and viceroy of Catalonia, was content with bread and herbs. The food of St. Peter of Alcantara, was nothing more than a small quantity of broth. St. Francis de Sales says, that we ought to eat in order to support life, and not live for the purpose of eating. Some appear to live for the sole purpose of eating, making, as the apostle said, the belly their God: "Inimicos crucis Christi, quorum finis interi-

tus, quorum venter Deus est."—Phil., iii. 18, 19. Tertullian says, that the vice of gluttony kills, or at least inflicts a deep wound on all other virtues: "Omnem disciplinam victus occidit aut vulnerat."—De jej. The sin of gluttony has caused the ruin of the world: for the sake of eating an apple, Adam brought death on himself and the entire human race.

11. But priests, who are bound by a vow of chastity, should pay special attention to the mortification of the appetite. St. Bonaventure says, that excess in eating, nourishes impurity: "Luxuria nutritur a ventris ingluvie."—De Prof. Relig., 1. 2, c. 52. And St. Augustine has written: "Si ciborum nimietate animus obruatur, illico mens torpescit et spinas libidinum germinabit." Hence in the forty-second Canon of the Apostles, we read: "Sacerdotes qui intemperanter ingurgitant, deponendi sunt. The wise man has said, that he who accustoms servants to delicate food, shall not find them obedient to his commands: "He that nourishes a servant delicately from his childhood, afterwards shall find him stubborn."—Prov., xxix. 21. St. Augustine exhorts us not to give the flesh strength to fight against the soul: "Ne præbeamus vires corpori, ne committat bellum adversus spiritum."—De sal. mon., c. 35. Palladius relates, that a certain monk being asked why he treated his body so badly, said: "Vexo eum qui vexat me." St. Paul has done and said the same: "Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo."—1 Cor., ix. 27. If the flesh is not mortified, it obeys reason only with difficulty. But on the other hand, according to St. Thomas, the devil, when vanquished in his temptations to the indulgence of the appetite, ceases to tempt to impurity: "Diabolus victus de gula, non tentat de libidine." Cornelius a Lapide says, that when intemperance is overcome, all other vices are easily conquered: "Gula debellata, facilius Christianus alia vitia profligabit."—In 1 Cor., ix. 27. Blosius remarks, that many find it easier to conquer other vices, than the vice of intemperance: "Ingluvies a plerisque superari difficilius solet quam cætera vitia."—Gloss. in Enchir. doctr., 11.

12. But some may say, God has purposely created the various kinds of food that we may enjoy them. I answer, God has created them that they may serve for the support of life, but not to be abused by intemperance. There are some delicious meats, which are not necessary for the support of life, these God has created, that by sometimes abstaining from them, we may practice mortification. God created the apple which he forbid Adam to eat, that Adam might abstain from it. Let us, at least, practice temperance in the use of delicacies. To practice temperance, St. Bonaventure says, that we must avoid four things: first, eating out of the time of meals; secondly, eating with too much avidity: thirdly, eating too large a quantity of food; and fourthly, we must avoid too much delicacy. Behold the words of the saint: "1º. Ante debitum tempus, vel sæpius comedere more pecudum: secundo, cum nimia aviditate sicut canes famelici: tertio, nimis se implere ex delectatione: quarto, nimis exquisita quærere."—De perf. lib. 1, cap. 36. What a shame to see a priest seeking a variety of meats, dressed in various ways, and giving trouble and annoyance to servants, and to the whole house, when every thing is not dressed so as to please his taste. Fervent priests are satisfied with what is placed before them. Reflect on the words of St. Jerome: "Facile contemnitur clericus qui sæpe vocatus ad prandium ire non recusat."—Ad Nepot. Hence, exemplary priests fly from banquets, in which, ordinarily speaking, there is a want of modesty, and of temperance. "Consolatores nos potius," adds the holy doctor, "laici in mœroribus suis quam convivas in prosperis noverint.

13. Thirdly, with regard to the sense of touch, it is necessary, in the first place, to abstain from familiarity with females, though relations. You will say: they are my sisters, my nieces; yes, but they are women. With regard to this sense, (which is very dangerous for priests,) they must use all possible caution and modesty with themselves. "Sciat unusquisque vestrum," says St. Paul, "vas suum possidere in sanctificatione...non in passione desiderii."—1 Thess. iv. 5.

Holy priests are accustomed to practice some painful penitential works, such as the discipline, or the use of little chains. Some despise these things, saying that sanctity consists in the mortification of the will. But I find that all the saints have thirsted after penitential austerities, and have sought to macerate the flesh to the utmost of their power. St. Peter of Alcantara wore a hair-shirt of punched iron, which kept his shoulders constantly lacerated. St. John of the Cross, wore a waistcoat, armed with iron points, and an iron chain, which could not be removed after his death, without taking with it a piece of the flesh. This saint used to say, that a person who should teach lax doctrine regarding the mortification of the flesh, ought not to be believed, even though he confirmed it by miracles.

14. It is true that interior mortification is the most necessary; but exterior mortification is also indispensable. To a person who wished to dissuade him from macerating his body, by saying that sanctity consists in conquering self-will, St. Aloysius Gonzaga replied, in the words of the Gospel: "Hæc oportet facere, et illa non omittere."—Mat., 23. To mother Mary of Jesus, of the order of St. Teresa, our Lord said, the world is destroyed not by penitential works, but by pleasures. "Mortifica corpus tuum et diabolam vinces," says St. Augustine. The remedy of the saints, particularly in temptations against purity, was the maceration of the flesh. In temptations contrary to chastity, St. Benedict, and St. Francis, rolled themselves among thorns. Father Rodriguez says, "If a person had entwined round him a serpent, which, by its poisoned bites, would seek to kill him, surely if he could not take away its life, he would at least, endeavour to draw its blood, and diminish its strength, in order to render it less able to injure him." Job tells us, that wisdom is not found among earthly delights: "Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium."—xxviii. 13. In one place, the Spouse in the Canticles said, that he dwells on the mountain of myrrh: "Vadam ad montem myrrhæ." (iv. 6): and in another,

that he feeds among the lilies: Qui pascitur inter lilia."—ii. 16. In reconciling these two passages, Philibert says, that on the mountain of myrrh, where the flesh is mortified, the lilies of purity spring up and flourish: "Lilia hæc oriuntur in monte myrrhæ, et illic illæsa servantur. Ubi mortificantur affectus, ibi lilia castimoniæ nascuntur et florent."—Serm., 28, in Cant. Should a person have ever violated chastity, reason requires that he should afterwards chastise the flesh: "Sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiæ.....ita nunc exhibete.....servire justitiæ in sanctificationem."—Rom. vi. 19.

15. If we have not courage to mortify the flesh by works of penance, let us, at least, endeavour to accept with patience the mortifications arising from the infirmities, the heat and cold which God sends us. St. Francis Borgia, once arrived late at a college of the order, and was obliged to remain, all night, in the open air, exposed to the cold and snow. In the morning, the fathers of the college were afflicted at what had happened; but the saint said, he was greatly consoled by thinking that God had sent the wind, the frost, and snow. "Curre Domine," says St. Bonaventure, "curre et vulnera servos tuos vulneribus sacris, ne vulnerentur vulneribus mortis."—Stim. div. am. c. 3. This we, too, should say, when we are afflicted with sickness and pains: Lord, chastise me with these healing wounds, that I may be freed from the deadly wounds of the flesh; or let us say, with St. Bernard: "Conteratur contemptor Dei: si recta sentis, dices: reus est mortis, crucifigatur." Yes, my God, it is just, that I, who have insulted you, should suffer affliction: I have been condemned to eternal death; let me, then, be crucified in this life, that I may not be tormented for eternity in the next. Let us, at least, bear the pains which God sends us. A certain author well observes, that a person who does not embrace voluntary pains, will scarcely bear involuntary sufferings with perfect patience. And on the other hand, St. Anselm says: "Cessat vindicta divina, si præcurrat conversio humana."—In 1 Cor.,

ii. 7. God will cease to chastise the sinner who voluntarily punishes himself for his sins.

16. Some imagine that a life of mortification is an unhappy life. No: the life of the man who practices mortification, is not unhappy; but the life of him who indulges his senses so as to offend God, is truly miserable: "Quis restitit ei, et habuit pacem?"—Job., ix. 4. A soul in sin is a sea agitated by the tempest: "Impii.....quasi mare fervens, quod quiescere non potest."—Isa., lvii. 20. St. Augustine says, that the man who is not in peace with God, is an enemy that wages war against himself: "Ipsi sibi est bellum qui pacem noluit habere cum Deo."—Serm. 11, de verb. Dom. The gratifications which we give the body fight against us, and make us unhappy: "Unde bella et lites in nobis? Nonne hinc? Ex concupiscentiis vestris quæ militant in membris vestris?"—Jac., iv. 1. On the other hand, the Lord says: "Vincenti dabo manna absconditum."—Apoc., ii. 17. To them who practice, mortification, God gives that sweetness and peace which are hidden from the unmortified, and which surpass all sensual pleasures: "Pax Dei quæ exsuperat omnem sensum."—Phil., iv. 7. Hence they who live, dead to earthly delights, are pronounced happy: "Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur."—Apoc., xiv. 13. Worldlings regard as miserable, the life of those who live at a distance from sensual gratifications. "Crucem vident, unctionem non vident," says St. Bernard: they see the mortifications of the saints, but not the interior consolations with which God caresses them, even in this life. The promises of God cannot fail: "Tollite jugum meum super vos.....et invenietis requiem animabus vestris."—Mat., xi. 29. Ah! the soul that loves God, suffers not in her mortifications. "Qui amat non laborat," says St. Augustine, in his Manual. He who loves, finds nothing difficult. "Amor," says a certain author, "Nomen difficultatis erubescit." As nothing resists death, so nothing resists love: "Fortis est ut mors dilectio."—Cant., viii. 6.

17. If we wish to acquire eternal delights, we must

deprive ourselves of temporal pleasures: "Qui voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet eam."—Mat., xvi. 25. Hence St. Augustine says: "Noli amare in hac vita, ne perdas in æterna vita." St. John saw all the saints, with palms in their hands: "Stantes ante thronum.....et palmæ in manibus eorum."—Apoc., vii. 9. To be saved, we must all be martyrs, either by the sword of the tyrant, or by voluntary mortification. Let us reflect that all we suffer is nothing compared with the eternal glory which awaits us: "Non sunt condignæ passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quæ revelabitur in nobis."—Rom., viii. 18. The transitory pains of this life shall merit for us eternal beatitude: "Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ..... æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis."—2 Cor., iv. 17. Hence, Philo, the Jew has written: "Oblectamenta præsentis vitæ quid sunt nisi furta vitæ futuræ?" The pleasures which we give the body, to the detriment of the soul, are thefts of the glory of heaven, which we commit against ourselves. On the other hand, St. Chrysostom says, that when God gives us an occasion of suffering, he bestows a greater grace than if he gave us power to restore life to the dead: "Quando Deus dat alicui ut mortuos suscitet, minus dat quam cum dat occasionem patiendi." He assigns the reason, saying: "Pro miraculis debitor sum Deo, at pro patientia debitorem habeo Christum." The saints are the living stones which compose the heavenly Jerusalem: "Tanquam lapides vivi superædificamini domus spiritualis," &c.—1 Pet., ii. 5. But these must be first polished by the chisel of mortification: "Scalpri salubris ictibus fabri polita malleo hanc saxa molem construunt." Hence every act of mortification is a work for heaven. This thought will sweeten all the bitterness we shall feel in mortification: "Justus autem ex fide vivit."—Rom., i. 17. To live well, and obtain salvation, we must live by faith, that is, in view of the eternity which awaits us: "Ibit homo in donum æternitatis suæ."—Eccl., xii. 5. Let us consider, says St. Augustine, that at the very time when the Lord exhorts us to

combat against temptations, he assists us, and prepares a crown for us: "Deus hortatur ut pugnes et deficientem sublevat, et vincentem coronat."—In Ps. 32, Conc. 1. Speaking of wrestlers, the apostle said, that they abstain from every thing which can be an obstacle to their winning a miserable temporal crown; how much more ought we to die to all things in order to acquire an infinite and eternal crown: "Omnis..... qui in agone contendit ab omnibus se abstinet; et illi quidem ut corruptibilem coronam accipiant, nos autem incorruptam."—1 Cor., ix. 25.

TENTH INSTRUCTION.

On the Love of God.

1. Peter de Blois says, that a priest without divine love: "Sacerdos dici potest, esse non potest." From the day of his ordination, a priest is no longer his own, but belongs to God. St. Ambrose has said: "Versus minister altaris Deo, non sibi natus est." And before him God himself said: "Incensum..... Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt, et ideo sancti erunt."—Levit., xxi. 6. Origen has called a priest, "Mens consecrata Deo."—Hom., 15, in Lev. From his very entrance into the ecclesiastical state, the priest declared, that he wished for no other portion than God: "Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ." If, then, adds St. Ambrose, God is the portion of the priest, he should live only for God: "Cui Deus portio est nihil curare debet nisi Deum." Hence the apostle has said, that he who is devoted to the service of the divine majesty, should not engage in worldly affairs, but should seek only to please him to whom he has given himself: "Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis secularibus, ut ei placeat cui se probavit."—2 Tim. ii. 4. Jesus Christ forbid the young man who wished to become one of his disciples, to return home for the purpose of burying his father: "Sequere

me et dimitte mortuos sepelire mortuos."—Mat., viii. 22. This lesson was, as the same St. Ambrose writes, directed to all ecclesiastics, to teach them that it is their duty to prefer the concerns of the divine glory to all human affairs, which may be an obstacle to their belonging entirely to God: "Paterni funeris sepultura prohibetur ut intelligas humana posthabenda divinis." Even in the Old Law, God declared to the priests, that he had chosen them from among the people, that they might be his without reserve: "Separavi vos a cæteris, ut essetis mei."—Lev., xx. 26. Hence he told them, that they should have no possession, no portion among seculars, because he himself wished to be their portion and inheritance: "In terra eorum nihil possidebitis, nec habebitis partem inter eos: ego pars et hæreditas tua in medio filiorum Israel."—Ib., xviii. 20. On this passage, Oleaster writes: "Magna dignatio Domini, si eam sacerdos cognoscas, quod velit Deus esse pars tua. Quid non habebis, si Deum habeas? The priest, then, should say with St. Augustine: "Eligant sibi alii partes, quibus fruantur, terrenas et temporales: portio mea Dominus est."

2. And, says St. Anselm, if we love not God, what will we love? "Si non amavero te, quid amabo?"—Med., 13. The emperor Diocletian, placed before St. Clement, gold, silver, and precious stones, in order to induce him to deny the faith: seeing his God put in comparison with a little dust, the saint heaved a sigh of sorrow. "Porro unum est necessarium." He who possesses all things without God, has nothing; but he who possesses God without any thing else, has all things. Hence, St. Francis had reason to say, and to repeat, as he did for an entire night, *my God and my all.* Happy, then, is he who can say with David: "Quid.....mihi est in cœlo? et a te quod volui super terram? Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in æternum."—Ps., lxxii. 25, 26. My God, neither in heaven nor on earth do I wish for any thing but you. You are, and shall be always, the Lord of my heart, and my only riches.

3. God deserves to be loved for his own sake,

because he is an object worthy of infinite love: but we should love him, at least, through gratitude for the infinite love he has shown in the benefit of redemption. What more could God do for us, than become man, and die for us? "Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis."—Jo., xv. 13. Before redemption, men could doubt if God loved them with a tender love; but how can they doubt it, after having seen him dead on a cross for the love of them. This has been, as it was called by Moses, and Elias, on Mount Thabor, an excess of love: "Dicebant excessum ejus quem completurus erat in Jerusalem."—Luc., ix. 31. An excess which all the angels shall not be able to comprehend for all eternity. Who, among men, says St. Anselm, could deserve that a God should die for him? "Qui dignus erat ut filius Dei mortem pro eo pateretur?"—De mens. cruce. c. 2. But it is certain that this Son of God has died for each of us: "Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus."—2 Cor., v. 15. The apostle writes, that when the death of our Saviour was preached to the Gentiles, it appeared to them foolishness: "Prædicamus Christum crucifixum: Judæis quidem seandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam."—1 Cor., i. 23. It was neither foolishness nor a lie, but a truth of faith. A truth which, as St. Laurence Justinian says, makes a God appear to us, foolish through love for man: "Vidimus Sapientem præ nimietate amoris infatuatum." O God, if Jesus Christ wished to show his love for his eternal Father could he give him a more convincing proof than by dying on a cross, as he has died, for each of us? I say more: if a servant had died for us, could we but love him? But where is our love and gratitude towards Jesus Christ?

4. Let us, at least, frequently remember what our Redeemer has done and suffered for us. They who frequently remember his passion, give great pleasure to Jesus Christ. If a person submitted to insults, wounds, and imprisonment, for the sake of a friend, how great should his gratification be, at hearing that the friend frequently remembered, and thought of his

sufferings. Ah! the soul that frequently thinks on the passion of Jesus Christ, and on the love which that enamoured God has shown us in his pains and humiliations, cannot but feel herself chained to his love: "Charitas Christi.....urget nos."—2 Cor., v. 14. But if all should burn with love for Jesus Christ, we, priests, should love him with a special love; for Jesus Christ has died in a special manner to make us priests: for as has been said in the first chapter, (paragraph 4,) without the death of Jesus Christ, we should not have the holy and immaculate victim which we now offer to God. Justly, then, has St. Ambrose said: "Etsi Christus pro omnibus passus est, pro nobis tamen specialius passus est.....Plus debet qui plus accipit. Reddamus ergo amorem pro sanguinis pretio."—Lib., 6, in Luc. Let us endeavour to understand the love which Jesus Christ has shown us in his passion, and we shall certainly renounce the love of creatures. "Oh si scires mysterium crucis!" said the apostle St. Andrew, to the tyrant who tempted him to deny Jesus Christ. As if he said, O tyrant, if you knew the love which your God has for you, and his desire for your salvation, you would certainly cease to tempt me, and through gratitude for so much love, you would devote yourself to his love. Happy, then, the man who keeps constantly before his eyes, the wounds of Jesus Christ! "Haurietis.....aquas de fontibus salvatoris."—Isa., xii. 3. Oh! what waters of devotion, what lights and affections do the saints draw from these fountains of salvation! Father Avila used to say, that the ignorance of the riches which we have in Jesus Christ, is the cause of the ruin of Christians. The learned boast of their science, but the apostle gloried in nothing but in the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified: "Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid nisi Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum."—1 Cor., ii. 2. Of What advantage are all sciences to him who knows not how to love Jesus Christ? "Etsi.....noverim .....omnem scientiam," said the same apostle, "charitatem autem non habuero, nihil sum."—1 Cor., xiii. 2. In another place he said that to gain Jesus

Christ he esteemed all things as dung: "Omnia..... arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam."—Phil., iii. 8. Hence he gloried in calling himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ: "Ego Paulus vinctus Christi."—Ephes., iii. 1.

5. Oh! happy the priest who, bound by these holy chains, gives himself entirely to Jesus Christ! God loves a soul that gives herself entirely to him, more than he does a hundred imperfect souls. If a prince had a hundred servants, ninety nine of whom served him with little affection, always giving him some displeasure, and had one who served him through pure love, always seeking to please him to the utmost of his power, surely the prince would love that faithful servant more than all the others: "Adolescentularum non est numerus; una est columba mea, perfecta mea."—Cant., vi. 7, 8. The Lord loves the soul that serves him perfectly, as if he had no other to love but her. St. Bernard says: "Disce a Christo quemadmodum diligas Christum."—Serm. 20, in Cant. From his birth Jesus Christ has given himself entirely to us: "Parvulus.....natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis."—Isa., ix. 6. And he has given himself through love: "Dilexit nos et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."—Ephes., v. 2. It is just, then, that we also through love give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ. He, says St. Chrysostom, has given himself without reserve to you; bestowing upon you his blood, his life, his merits: "Totum tibi dedit nihil sibi reliquit." It is but just that you, too, give yourself without reserve to Jesus Christ. "Integrum te da illi," says St. Bernard, "quia ille, ut te salvaret, integrum se tradidit."—De mod. bene viv., Serm. 8. But if this holds for all, it applies in a special manner to priests. Hence, addressing particularly the priests of his order, St. Francis of Assisium, knowing the special obligation of a priest to belong entirely to Jesus Christ, said: "Nihil de vobis retineatis vobis, ut totos recipiat qui se vobis totum exhibet." The Redeemer has died for all, that each may live no longer to himself, but only to that God who has given his life for him: "Pro omnibus mortuus est Christus, ut et qui vivunt

jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est."—2 Cor., v. 15. Oh! that each of us would continually say to God with St. Augustine: "Moriar mihi ut tu solus in me vivas."—Serm. 122, de temp. But to belong entirely to God, we must give him our whole, undivided love: "Minus te amat qui aliquid amat quod non propter te amat."—S. Aug. Conf., cap. 29. He cannot belong entirely to God who loves any thing which is not God, or loves it not for God. "Anima sola esto," exclaims St. Bernard, "ut soli te serves." Ah! redeemed soul, divide not your love among creatures; keep yourself alone for that God who alone merits all your love. It was this that Blessed Egidius meant by the words *una uni*, that is, the one soul which we have, we ought not to divide, but give entirely to that one God, whose love for us exceeds the love of all others, and whose claims to our love surpass the claims of all.

6. Let us now see what a priest must do in order to belong entirely to God. First of all, he must have a great desire of sanctity: "Initium.....illius.....est disciplinæ concupiscentia."—Sap., vi. 18. Holy desires are the wings with which souls fly to God: "Justorum.....semita, quasi lux splendens, procedit et crescit usque ad perfectum diem."—Prov., iv. 18. The way of the just is like the light of the sun, which from his rising increases as he advances in his course; but, on the other hand, the light of sinners, like that of the evening, constantly grows more dim, until it is entirely lost, so that the miserable beings no longer see where they are going: "Via impiorum tenebrosa; nesciunt ubi corruant."—Prov., iv. 19. Miserable, then, the man who is content with his conduct, and seeks not to advance. "Non progredi, reverti est," says St. Augustine, Ep. 143. And St. Gregory has said, he who remains in a river without making an effort to make way against the current, shall be carried back by it. Hence St. Bernard said to a tepid soul, "Non vis proficere? vis ergo deficere." Are you unwilling to advance? Then you wish to go backward. You perhaps will answer: I wish to remain as I am, neither better nor worse. But this is

impossible. "Hoc vis," adds the saint, "quod esse non potest."—Ep. 25. This cannot be, since Job has said, that man "never continueth in the same state." Job, xiv. 2. To win the prize that is the eternal crown, we must run till we obtain it: "Sic currite ut comprehendatis."—1 Cor., ix. 24. He who ceases to run, shall lose all his labour and the crown of glory.

7. "Beati qui esuriunt justitiam."—Mat., v. 6. For, as the divine mother said, God fills with his graces the souls that desire to become saints. "Esurientes implevit bonis."—Luc., i. 53. Mark the words *esuriunt* and *esurientes*. But to become a saint, a simple desire is not enough; a strong desire, and a certain hunger after sanctity, are necessary. As flame runs through a dry reed, so they who have this blessed hunger, do not walk, but run in the way of virtue. "Fulgebunt justi et tanquam scintillæ in arundineto discurrent."—Sap., iii. 7. Who, then, shall become a saint? He who wishes to become one: "Si vis perfectus esse, vade," &c.—Mat., xix. 21. But he must wish for sanctity with true humility. The tepid Christian, as the Wise Man says, also wills, but not with a sincere will. He desires, and always desires, but his desires brings him to destruction; for he feeds on them, and in the mean time goes from bad to worse: "Vult et non vult piger; desideria occidunt pigrum."—Prov. xiii. 4. Wisdom, that is sanctity, is easily found by them who seek it: "Invenitur ab his qui quærunt illum."—Sap., vi. 13. But to find sanctity, it is not enough to desire it; we must desire it with a determined will to attain it: "Si quæritis, quærite," says Isaias, xxi. 12. He who desires sanctity with a resolute will of acquiring it, easily attains it. "Non passibus pedum," says St. Bernard, "sed desideriis quæritur Deus." And St. Teresa has written: "Let our thoughts be great; from great thoughts our advancement shall come. Our desires must not be low and grovelling, but we must trust in God; that gradually doing violence to ourselves, we shall, with the divine grace, arrive at the sanctity which the saints have attained." "Dilata os tuum," says the Lord, "et implebo illud."—Ps. lxxx. 11. A

mother cannot give suck to an infant if it open not its mouth to take the milk. "Dalata os tuum," that is, says St. Athanasius, "Dilata desiderium tuum." By holy desires, the saints have arrived at perfection in a short time: "Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa."—Sap., iv. 12. This was verified, particularly in St. Lewis Gonzaga, who in a few years attained such sublime sanctity, that to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi who saw in him bliss, it appeared that his glory was scarcely surpassed by that of any of the saints. And she was told that he attained to such glory by the ardour with which he desired, during life, to love God as much as he deserved to be loved.

8. Desires, says St. Laurence Justinian, give strength to the soul, and render labour light: "Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviorem." Hence the saint adds, that he who has an ardent desire of victory, has already conquered: "Magna victoriæ pars est vincendi desiderium." St. Augustine has said: "Laboranti augusta via est, amanti lata." To him who has but little love for sanctity, the way is narrow and difficult to be trodden; but he who ardently loves perfection, finds the way broad, and walks in it without labour. The broadness, then, of the way, is found not in the way, but in the heart; that is, in a determined will to please God: "Viam mandatorum cucurri cum dilatasti cor meum."—Ps. cxviii. 32. Blosius says that the Lord is not less pleased by holy desires than by ardent love: "Deus non minus sancto desiderio lætatur quam si anima amore liquefiat." He that has not the desire of becoming a saint, let him at least ask it of God, and God will give it to him. And let us be persuaded that to become a saint, is not difficult to him who desires it. In the world it is difficult for a vassal to obtain the friendship of his sovereign, however ardently he may desire it, but, said the courtier of the emperor mentioned by St. Augustine, (lib. 8, conf., c. 7.) to obtain the friendship of God, it is enough to wish for it. Behold, if I wish I am instantly his friend: "Amicus Dei si voluero, ecce nunc fio." And St. Bernard has written that a

man cannot have a greater proof of being the friend of God, and of enjoying his grace, than when he desires greater grace in order to please God: "Nullum omnibus præsentiæ ejus certius testimonium est quam desiderium gratiæ amplioris."—Serm. de S. Andr. And, adds the saint, it matters not that he should have been a sinner, for "God attends not to what a man has done, but to what he wishes to be."

9. Secondly, the priest who wishes to be a saint, must do all his actions for the sole purpose of pleasing God. All his words, thoughts, desires, and actions, must be an exercise of divine love. The spouse in the Canticles assumed at one time the character of a fowler; at another, of a warrior; now a gardener; again, a cultivator of the vine; but in all these occupations, she presented the appearance of a lover; because she did all for the love of her spouse. So, in like manner, all the words, thoughts, sufferings, actions, of a priest, whether he says Mass or hears confessions, or preaches, or meditates, or assists the dying, or mortifies the flesh, or whatever else he does, should all proceed from the same love; for he ought to do all in order to please God. Jesus Christ has said: "Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit."—Mat., vi. 22. By the eye, the holy Fathers have understood the intention. Then, says St. Augustine, "Bonum opus intentio facit." The Lord said to Samuel: "Homo.....videt ea quæ parent, Dominus autem intuetur cor."—1 Reg., xvi. 7. Men are satisfied with the works which they see, but God who beholds the heart, is not content with any work unless he sees it performed with a view to please himself. "Holocausta medullato offeram tibi," says David, Ps. lxv. 15. Works performed without the proper intention, are victims without marrow, which God rejects. In the oblations made to him, he regards not the value of the offering, but the affection with which it is presented. "Oblata Deo," says Salvian, "non pretio sed affectu placent." Of our Saviour it was justly said: "Bene omnia fecit."—Marc. vii. 37. For in all his actions he sought

only the pleasure of his eternal Father: "Non quæro voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me."—Joan., v. 30.

10. But, O God, only few of our works are perfectly pleasing to you; because few are done without some desire of our own glory. "Rarum est," says St. Jerome, "fidelem animam inveniri, ut nihil ob gloriæ cupiditatem faciat."—In dial. Host. et Lucif. How many priests on the day of judgment shall say to Jesus Christ: "Domine, Domine.....in nomine tuo prophetavinus.....dæmonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus."—Mat., vii. 22. Lord, we have preached, we have celebrated Masses, we have heard confessions, we have converted souls, we have assisted the dying. The Lord shall answer: "Nunquam novi vos, discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem."—Ibid., *v.* 23. He shall say: Begone, I have never known you as my ministers, for you have not laboured for me, but for your own glory or interest. Hence Jesus Christ exhorts us to conceal the works which we perform: "Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua."—Mat., vi. 3. The Son of God tells us to conceal our works, that, as St. Augustine remarks, what we do for God may not be afterwards lost through vanity: "Quod facit amore Dei non corrumptat vanitas."—Serm. 60, de temp. God abominates rapine in the holocaust: "Ego Dominus odio habens rapinam in holocausto." Isa., lxi. 8. By rapine is meant precisely the seeking of our own glory, or of self-interest in the works of God. He who truly loves, says St. Bernard, merits a reward, but does not seek it: the only recompense which he demands is to please the God whom he loves: "Verus amor præmium non requirit, sed meretur; habet præmium, sed id quod amatur."—De dilig. Deo. In a word, as the same saint says in another place, "Verus amor sci ipso contentus est." True love is content with itself; that is, with being love, and demands nothing more. The marks by which a priest may know whether he acts with a pure intention, are the following. First, if he loves works that are attended with greater inconvenience, and less glory. Secondly, if he preserves peace when he has not attained

the object which he proposed. He who works for God, has already attained his end, which is to please God; and, on the other hand, he who is disturbed when he fails in the attainment of his object, shows that he has not laboured solely for God. Thirdly, if he rejoices in the good done by others as if it had been done by himself, and entertains no jealousy when others engage in the works which he performs, but desires to see all labouring to give glory to God, and says with Moyses: "Quis tribuat ut omnis populus prophetizet."—Num., xi. 29.

11. The days of the priest who performs all his actions for God, are full days: "Et dies pleni invenientur in eis."—Ps. lxxii. 10. But of them who act for a selfish end, it is said that they do not reach even the half of their days: "Dolosi non dimidiabunt dies suos."—Ps. liv. 24. Hence St. Eusebius has written, that we ought to consider ourselves to have lived only on the day on which we have denied our own will: "Illum tantum diem vixisse te computa in quo voluntas propria abnegasti." Seneca says that he who makes us a small present through love, imposes on us a greater obligation, than another who bestows great favours upon us through a motive of self-interest: "Magis nos obligat qui exiguum dedit libenter quam qui non voluntatem tantum juvandi habuit, sed cupiditatem."—De ben., c. 7. Certainly the Lord is more pleased by a trifling act performed in order to do his will, than by the most splendid works done for our own satisfaction. Of the poor widow who gave two mites in the temple, Jesus Christ said that she gave more than all the others: "Vidua hæc.....plus omnibus misit."—Marc., xii. 43. On this passage St. Cyprian says: "Considerans non quantum, sed ex quanto dedisset." The Lord regarded not the sum but the affection with which it was given. The Abbot Pambo, seeing a woman decked out in costly ornaments, began to weep. Being asked the cause of his tears, he said: "O God, how much more does this woman do to please men than I do to please God?" In the life of St. Lewis, king of France, (cap. 54), it is related that a father of the order of

St. Dominick, who was going to court, asked a woman whom he saw with a lighted torch in one hand and a vessel of water in the other, why she carried these things; she answered; with this torch I wish to burn heaven, and with this water I desire to extinguish hell, that God may be loved solely, because he deserves all love. Oh! happy the priest who labours only to please God. He who seeks only to please God, imitates the souls in heaven, who, as the angelic doctor says, "potius volunt ipsum esse beatum quam ipsas." They rejoice more in the felicity of God than in their own happiness, because they love him more than themselves.

12. Thirdly, the priest who wishes to be holy, must be ready to suffer in peace for God, all things, poverty, dishonour, infirmity, and death. The apostle says: "Portate Deum in corpore vestro."—1 Cor., vi. 20. In his comment on this text, Gilibert says: "Portari vult a nobis Christus, sed gloriose non cum tædio, non cum murmure; portari non trahi; trahenti enim onerosus est Christus."—Serm. 17, in Cant. Jesus Christ wishes to be carried by us in peace and joy. He who carries him with tediousness or complaint, carries not, but drags him by force. The love which a soul bears to God, is shown in embracing not delights, but insults and sufferings. This we learn from the words of our Redeemer when he went to meet the soldiers who came to capture him, in order to put him to death: "Ut cognoscat mundus, quia diligo Patrem.....surgite, eamus hinc."—Joan., xiv. 31.—Hence the saints, in imitation of Jesus Christ, have gone with joy to embrace torments and death. S. Joseph of Leonessa, a capuchin, was once obliged to undergo a painful operation. When some persons present spoke of binding him with cords he took the crucifix into his hands and said: "What cords! what cords! My Lord who was nailed to the cross for my sake, binds me sufficiently to endure all pain for the love of him. Thus he bore the incision without complaint. St. Teresa said: "Who is there that can behold his Lord covered with wounds, and persecuted by enemies, without being willing to embrace, and

desirous of suffering every tribulation?" St. Bernard writes: "Grata ignominia crucis ei qui crucifixo ingratus non est."—Serm. 25, in Cant. To him who loves his crucified God, insults and pains are very acceptable.

13. The apostle says that in patience particularly, we priests should make ourselves known as the ministers of Jesus Christ: "Exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros, in multa patientia.....in necessitatibus, in angustiis.....in laboribus," &c.—2 Cor., vi. 4, 5. Thomas a Kempis has written: "In judicio non quæretur quid legimus, sed quid fecimus." Many men of learning are acquainted with many things, but know not how to bear any thing for God; and what is worse, they are incapable of understanding the great fault which they commit by their impatience. "Habentes oculos, non videtis," says the Prophet Jeremias, v. 21. What does learning profit the man who has not charity? "Et si noverim.....omnem scientiam," says St. Paul, ".....charitatem autem non habuero, nihil sum."—1 Cor., xiii. 2. But, as the same apostle has observed, "Charitas omnia suffert."—Ibid., *v.* 7. He who wishes to become a saint must suffer persecution "Omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo Jesu, persecutionem patientur."—2 Tim., iii. 12. And before him our Saviour said: "Si me persecuti sunt et vos persequentur."—Joan., xv. 20. The life of a saint cannot, says St. Hilary, be a life of quiet and tranquillity; it must be often disturbed by contradictions and tried by patience: "Non otiosa ætas religiosi viri est neque quietam exigit vitam; impugnatur sæpe et hæc sunt quæ fidem probant."—In Ps. cxxviii. The Lord chastises those whom he accepts for his children: "Flagellat.....filium quem recipit."—Heb., xii. 6. "Ego quos amo arguo et castigo."—Apoc., iii. 19. And why? Because patience tries the love and perfect fidelity of a soul: "Patientia.....opus perfectum habet."—Jac., i. 4. It was this that the Archangel Raphael meant to say to holy Tobias: "Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te."—Tob., xii. 13.

14. Sometimes we shall be reproved for a fault

which we have not committed; but what matter, says St. Augustine? We ought to accept the reproof in atonement for other sins, to which we have consented: "Etsi non habemus peccatum quod objicitur, habemus tamen quod digne in nobis flagelletur."—In Ps. 68. Let us attend to the words of holy Judith, who says that in this life chastisements come from God, not for our destruction, but that we may amend, and thus escape eternal vengeance: "Ad emendationem, et non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credimus."—Jud., viii. 27. If, then, on account of past sins, we find ourselves debtors to the divine justice, we should not only accept with patience the tribulations which befal us, but should also pray with St. Augustine: "Hic ure, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas." Job said: "Si bona suscepimus de manu Dei, mala quare non suscipiamus?"—ii. 20. He said this because he well knew that we gain far more by patiently accepting the evils, that is, the tribulations of this life, than we do by temporal blessings. But whether we will or not, we must suffer the miseries of this life: he who bears them with patience merits heaven, but he who is impatient under them, also suffers from them, but lays up merits for hell. "Eadem tunsio," says St. Augustine, "bonos perducit ad gloriam, malos redigit in favillam."—Serm. 222. Speaking of the good and the wicked thief, the same saint says: "Quos passio jungebat, causa separabat." Both suffered death, but one of them, because he accepted it with patience, was saved; the other, because he blasphemed in his suffering, was lost. St. John the Apostle saw that the saints who were in the enjoyment of the beatific vision, came not from the delights of the earth, but from tribulations: "Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna.....Ideo sunt ante thronum Dei."—Apoc., vii. 14, 15.

15. Fourthly and lastly, he who wishes to be a saint, must wish only what God wishes. All our good consists in uniting ourselves to the will of God: "Et vita in voluntate ejus."—Ps. xxix. 6. St. Teresa says: "All that he who practises mental prayer, should seek, is to conform his will to the divine will;

let him be assured that in this consists the highest perfection." All that the Lord demands of us is, that we give him our heart; that is, our will: "Fili mi præbe mihi cor tuum."—Prov., xxiii. 26. St. Anselm says that God asks and, as it were, begs our heart; and when cast off, he does not depart, but repeats his petitions: "Nonne tu es Deus meus, qui tam crebro pulsas et mendicas ad ostium nostrum dicens. Præbe fili mi, cor tuum mihi; imo repulsus, te iterum ingeris?"—De mens. cruc., c. 5. The most acceptable offering, then, which we can present to God, is the oblation of our will, saying with the apostle: "Domine, quid me vis facere?"—Acts, ix. 6. Hence St. Augustine has written: "Nihil gratius Deo possumus offerre quam ut dicamus ei; posside nos." The Lord said that he had found in David a man according to his own heart. And why? Because David fulfilled all his divine wills: "Inveni.....virum secundum cor meum, qui facit omnes voluntates meas."—Act., xiii. 22. Let us endeavour to say always, with David: "Doce me facere voluntatem tuam."—Ps. cxlii. 9. Lord, teach me to do nothing but what you will. Hence we must frequently offer ourselves to God, saying with the same holy prophet: "Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum."—Ps. lvi. 8. But we must remember that our merit consists in embracing the divine will, not so much in things that are pleasing to us, as in those that are opposed to self-love. In these we show the strength of the love we bear to God. The venerable John de Avila used to say, that a single *Blessed be God*, in things that are opposed to our inclination, is of greater value than six thousand acts of thanksgiving in what is agreeable to us. And here it is necessary to understand, that all that befals us, happens through the will of God: "Quidquid hic accidit contra voluntatem nostram noveris non accidere nisi de voluntate Dei."—S. Aug. in ps. 148. This is the meaning of the words of Ecclesiasticus: "Bona et mala, vita et mors .....a Deo sunt."—xi. 14. Thus when a person offends us, God wills not his sin, but he wills that we bear with the insult. When our reputation or

property is taken away, we must say with holy Job: "Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit, sicut Domino placuit ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum."—Job, i. 21.

16. He who loves the will of God, enjoys continual peace even in this life. "Delectare in Domino," said David, "et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui."—Ps. xxxvi. 4. Our heart, which has been created for an infinite good, cannot be satisfied by all creatures which are finite; and therefore though it should possess all goods but God, the heart is not content; it always seeks after new enjoyments: but when it finds God, it possesses all things—he satisfies all its demands. Hence our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: "Qui autem biberit ex aqua quam ego dabo ei non sitiet in æternum."—Joan., iv. 13. And in another place he said: "Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur."—Mat. v. 6. Hence he who loves God, is not afflicted at any thing that happens: "Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit."—Prov., xii. 21. For, the just man knows that whatever occurs, happens to him by the will of God. If, says Salvian, the saints are humbled, they wish for the humiliation; if they are poor, they rejoice in their poverty; in a word, they wish only what their God wishes, and therefore they enjoy continual peace: "Humiles sunt, hoc volunt; pauperes sunt, paupertate delectantur; itaque beati dicendi sunt." In afflictions it is lawful to pray to be delivered from them, as Jesus Christ did in the garden: "Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste."—Mat., xxvi. 39. But we must also add with the Redeemer: "Verumtamen, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu."

17. It is certain that what God wills is best for us. Father M. Avila once wrote to a sick priest: friend, think not of what you would do if you were in health, but be content to remain sick as long as it shall please God. If you seek the will of God, is it not as profitable to you to be sick as to be in health? We must be resigned in all things, even in the temptations by which we are impelled to offend God. The apostle besought the Lord to deliver him from the many temp-

tations which he suffered against chastity: "Datus est mihi stimulus carnis meæ.....propter quod ter Dominum rogavi ut discederet a me."—2 Cor., xii. 7, 8. But in answer, God said to him: "Sufficit tibi gratia mea." Let us be persuaded that God not only desires, but is, also, solicitous for our welfare: "Dominus sollicitus est mei."—Ps. xxxix. 18. Let us, then, abandon ourselves into the hands of God, for he has care of us: "Omnem sollicitudinem vestram projicientes in eum quoniam ipsi est cura de vobis."—1 Pet., v. 7. Finally, how happy shall be the death of a soul perfectly conformed to the will of God! But he who wishes to die in sentiments of perfect conformity to the divine will, must first conform to it in all things during life. Let us, then, in all contradictions, and crosses which befal us, accustom ourselves to acts of resignation, always repeating, with the saints, that great prayer which Jesus Christ has taught us: "Fiat voluntas tua, fiat voluntas tua." Or let us repeat the words of the same Saviour: "Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te."—Mat., xi. 26. And let us continually offer ourselves to God, saying with the divine mother: "Ecce ancilla Domini." Lord behold your servant, dispose of me, and of all that belongs to me, as you please; I accept all from your hands St. Teresa used to offer herself fifty times in the day to God. Let us also say to him, with the apostle: "Domine quid me vis facere?" My God, make known to me what you wish from me, and I will do it. The saints have done great things in order to accomplish the will of God. Some have fled into the deserts, others have shut themselves up in the cloister, and others have suffered torments and death. Let us, also, who are priests, and are bound by stricter obligations to sanctity, unite ourselves to the divine will; let us become saints; let us not be diffident on account of past sins. "Non attendit Deus," says St. Bernard, "quid fecerit homo, sed quid velit esse. A resolute will, with the divine aid, conquers all things. Let us pray always: he who asks, receives: "Omnis qui petit accipit."—Mat., vii. 8. Whatsoever we ask in prayer, we shall obtain:

"Quodcumque volueritis petetis et fiet vobis."—Is., xv. 7. And among all prayers, let the beautiful prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola, be always dear to us; let us repeat it continually: "Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis." Lord, give me your love and your grace, and I desire nothing more. But, like St. Augustine, we must ask this gift of divine love continually, and earnestly. "Exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me," says the holy doctor, "Deus meus, rex meus, pater meus, honor meus salus mea, luxa mea, vita mea: exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me. Te solum amo: te solum quæro. Sane et aperi oculos meos. Respice fugitivum tuum, satis inimicis tuis serviverim. Jubeas me purum perfectumque amatorem esse sapientiæ tuæ."—Lib. 1, solil. c. 1. And in asking the divine graces, I add, with St. Bernard, let us always have recourse to the intercession of Mary, who obtains for her servants whatever she asks from God: "Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus, quia quod quærit invenit, et frustari non potest."

THE ELEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

On Devotion to Most Holy Mary.

[This instruction may serve either for an instruction, or for a sermon; but whether it be given in the form of an instruction or of a sermon, the person who gives the spiritual exercises to the priests, is entreated not to omit this discourse, which is, perhaps, the most fruitful of all: for without devotion to the divine Mother, it is morally impossible for any one to be a good priest.]

1. Let us, first, consider the moral necessity of the intercession of Mary for priests; and secondly, the confidence which they ought to have in the prayers of this divine mother. And first, with regard to the necessity of invoking her intercession, it is necessary to know, that although the Council of Trent has only

declared that the invocation of the saints is useful, still St. Thomas has asked the question: "Utrum debeamus sanctos orare ad interpellandum pro nobis?" —In 4, sent. dist. 45, q. 3, a. 2; and has answered in the affirmative, saying, that the order of the divine law requires that we, mortals, be saved through the saints, by obtaining, through their prayers, the graces necessary for salvation. "Ordo est," says the holy doctor, "divinitus institutus in rebus, secundum Dionysium, ut per media ultima reducantur in Deum. Unde cum sancti qui sunt in patria sunt Deo propinquissimi, hoc divinæ legis ordo requirit ut nos qui peregrinamur a Domino in eum per sanctos medios reducamur." He afterwards adds: "Sicut mediantibus sanctorum suffragiis, Dei beneficia in nos deveniunt ita oportet nos in Deum reduci ut iterato beneficia ejus sumamus mediantibus sanctis." Other authors, particularly the continuator of Tournely and Sylvius, hold the same opinion. The continuator of Tournely says: "Lege naturali tenemur eum ordinem observare quem Deus instituit: ac constituit Deus ut ad salutem inferiores perveniant, implorato superiorum suffragio."—Tom. 1, de relig. c. 2, de orat. a. 4, q. 1.

2. But if it is a duty to ask the prayers of the saints, how much more strictly are we bound to invoke the intercession of Mary, whose prayers are more efficacious with God, than the prayers of all the other saints. St. Thomas says, that through the abundant grace which God has given them, the saints can save many, but that the Blessed Virgin has merited grace sufficient to save all: "Magnum est in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum: sed quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium, hoc esset maximum: et hoc est in Christo et Beata Virgine."—Ep. 8. St. Bernard has written, that as we have access to the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, so we have access to the Son through the Mother: "Per te accessum habeamus ad filium, O inventrix gratiæ, mater salutis, ut per te nos suscipiat qui per te datus est nobis."—Serm. in dom. inf. Oct. Assumpt. Hence

he afterwards said, that all the graces we receive from God, come to us through Mary: "Totius boni plenitudinem (Deus) posuit in Maria: ut proinde si quid spei nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare. Hortus deliciarum, ut undique fluant aromata ejus, charismata scilicet gratiarum." Serm. de Aquæduct. The saint assigns the following reason for asserting that all the divine graces come to us through the hands of Mary: "Sic est voluntas ejus qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam." This may be also inferred from all the texts of Scripture which the holy church applies to Mary: "Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino."—Prov., viii. 35. "In me gratia omnis viæ et veritatis."—Eccl., xxiv. 25. "Qui operantur in me non peccabunt: qui elucidant me vitam æternam habebunt."—Ibid. The words of the holy church, in the *Salve Regina*, in which she calls Mary, *our life and our hope*, (Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra salve,) are sufficient to confirm us all in this doctrine.

3. Hence St. Bernard exhorts us to have recourse to this divine Mother, with a secure confidence of obtaining the graces which we ask her to procure for us; because the Son knows not how to refuse anything to the Mother: "Ad Mariam recurre: non dubius dixerim, exaudiet utique Mariam Filius."—Serm. cit. de Aquæd. Hence the saint afterwards calls Mary, the entire ground of his hope: "Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala, hæc maxima fiducia mea, hæc tota ratio spei meæ." He concludes by saying, that we should ask all the graces we stand in need of, through Mary, because she obtains whatever she asks, and her prayers cannot be rejected: "Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus: quia quod quærit invenit et frustrari non potest."—Ib. Before him, St. Ephrem said the same: "Nobis non est alia quam a te, fiducia, O Virgo sincerissima." St. Ildephonsus teaches the same doctrine: "Omnia bona quæ illis summa majestas decrevit facere: tuis manibus, O Maria, decrevit commendare: commissi quippe sunt tibi thesauri et ornamenta gratiarum." The same is held by St. Peter Damian: "In manibus tuis sunt omnes the-

sauri miserationum Dei." St. Bernardine of Sienna says: "Tu dispensatrix omnium gratiarum: salus nostra in manu tua est."—This, too, was the doctrine of St. John Damascene, St. Germanus, St. Anselm, St. Antonine, of Idiota, and of so many other learned authors, such as Segneri, Pacciuchelli, Crasset, Vega Mendoza, and Natalis Alexander, who says: "Qui (Deus) vult ut omnia bona ab ipso expectemus, potentissima virginis matris intercessione impetranda, cum eam ut par est invocemus."—Epist. 176, in calce. Tom. 4, Moral. Father Contenson has also held this opinion. Explaining the words of Jesus Christ on the cross, to St. John, he says: "Ecce mater tua: quasi diceret; nullus sanguinis mei particeps erit, nisi intercessione matris meæ. Vulnera gratiarum fontes sunt, sed ad nullos derivabuntur rivi, nisi per Mariæ canalem. Joannes discipule, tantum a me amaberis, quantum eam amaveris."—Theol. ment. et cord. tom. 2, lib. 10, d. 4, cap. 1.

4. And, if on account of the moral necessity of Mary's intercession for all, every christian ought to be devoted to the Mother of God, how much more should priests, who are bound by greater obligations, and stand in need of greater graces for salvation, practice devotion in her honour. We, priests, should remain always at the feet of Mary, asking the aid of her prayers. St. Francis Borgia had great doubts about the salvation of those who have not a special devotion to Mary; because, according to St. Antonine, he who expects graces from God without the intercession of Mary, attempts to fly without wings: "Sine alis tentat volare." St. Anselm has gone so far as to say: "Impossibile est ut a te, O Maria, aversus salvetur."—De Excell. Virg. cap. 11. St. Bonaventure has said the same: "Qui neglexerit illam morietur in peccatis suis."—Ps., 116. Blessed Albertus Magnus says: "Gens quæ non serviverit tibi, peribit."—Bibl. Mare. c. 60. And, speaking of Mary, Richard of St. Laurence, says: "In mare mundi submergentur omnes illi quos non suscipit navis ista. But, on the other hand, he who is faithful in the service of Mary, will be certainly saved. "O Mother of God," says St.

John Damascene, "if I put my confidence in you, I shall be saved. If I am under your protection, I have nothing to fear; for to be devoted to you, is to have certain arms of salvation, which God gives only to those whose salvation he wills in a special manner." —Serm. de nat. B. Virg.

5. Let us now pass to the confidence which we ought to have in the intercession of Mary, on account of her power and mercy. As to her power: "Cosmas, of Jerusalem, has called the intercession of our Queen, not only powerful, but omnipotent: "Omnipotens auxilium tuum O Maria." And Richard of St. Laurence, has written: "Ab omnipotente Filio omnipotens mater facta est."—Lib. 4. de laud. Virg. The Son is omnipotent by nature, the Mother by grace, in as much as she obtains from God whatsoever she asks. That this grace has been given to Mary, we may infer from two reasons: first, because of all creatures, Mary has been the most faithful, and the greatest lover of God. Hence, as Suares says, the Lord loves Mary more than all the other saints, and all the angels together. St. Bridget heard our Lord, one day, saying to his mother: "Mater, pete quid vis a me: non enim potest esse inanis petitio tua.....Quia tu mihi nihil negasti in terris, ego tibi nihil negabo in cœlis."—Rev., 1, cap. 4. The second reason is, that Mary is a mother: hence St. Antonine has said, that her prayers partake of the nature of a command, because they are the prayers of a mother: "Oratio Disparæ habet rationem imperii, unde impossibile est eam non exaudiri."—Part., 4, tit. 25, c. 17. St. John Damascene says: "O Lady, you have all power to save sinners; you need no other recommendation to God, since you are his mother." And St. George of Nicomedia, has written, that Jesus Christ, in order to discharge the obligations which he owed, in a certain manner, to Mary, for having given him his human nature, grants whatever she asks from him: "Filius quasi exsolvens debitum, petitiones tuas implet."—Orat. de exit. Matr. Hence St. Peter Damian has gone so far as to say, that when Mary goes to Jesus to ask a favour for any of her clients: "Accedit ad

illud humanæ reconciliationis altare non solum rogans sed imperans; domina non ancilla: nam Filius nihil negans honorat."—Serm. 1, de Natur. B. V. From the time that Mary was on this earth, she had the privilege of having all her prayers heard by her Son. Speaking of Mary's request to Jesus, to provide wine, when it failed at the marriage of Cana, in Galilee, St. John Chrysostom says, that though the Redeemer appeared to refuse the favour, saying: "Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? nondum enim venit hora mea (Jo. ii. 4): still he granted the petition of his mother. "Et licet ita responderit; maternis tamen precibus obtemperavit." The prayers of Mary, says St. Germanus, obtain great graces for the most abandoned sinners, because they are prayers accompanied with the authority of a mother: "Tu autem materna in eum auctoritate pollens, etiam iis qui enormiter peccant, eximiam remissionis gratiam concilias: non enim potes non exaudiri, cum Deus tibi, ut veræ et intemeratæ matri, in omnibus morem gerat."—Vide in Euch. Deip. In a word, there is no one, however wicked, whom Mary does not save by her intercession, when she wishes. Hence St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says, O great Mother of God: "Habes vires insuperabiles, ne clementiam tuam superet multitudo peccatorum. Nihil tuæ resistit potentiæ: tuam enim gloriam Creator existimat esse propriam."—Orat. de exitu B. V. To you, then, O my Queen, says St. Peter Damian, nothing is impossible, since you can succour and save even those that are in despair: "Cui possibile est etiam desperatos in spem salutis relevare."

6. But, if Mary is powerful, and able to save us by her intercession, she is equally merciful, and willing to obtain our salvation: "Nec facultas nec voluntas illi deesse potest," says St. Bernard. She is called the Mother of Mercy, because her compassion for us makes her love and assist us as a mother assists a sick child. The love of all mothers together, is not equal to the love which Mary bears a client that recommends himself to her. Hence she is compared to a fair olive tree: "Quasi oliva speciosa in campis."—Eccl., xxiv.

19. "In campis," says Cardinal Hugo, "ut omnes eam respiciant, omnes ad eam confugiant." As the olive gives oil, the symbol of mercy, to him who possess it, so Mary pours her mercies on all who have recourse to her. B. Amedeus has written, that our Queen is continully praying for us in heaven: "Adstat Beatissima virgo vultui conditoris prece potentissima interpellans pro nobis." And before him, Venerable Bede said: "Stat Maria in conspectu filii sui non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare."—In cap. 1, Luc. St. Bernard asks, what else but mercy, can flow from the fountain of mercy? "Quid de fonte pietatis, nisi pietas?" St. Bridget once heard our Saviour saying to Mary: "Mater pete quid vis a me." Mary answered: "Misericordiam peto pro miseris."—Rev. lib. 1, cap. 46. As if she said: Son, since you have made me the Mother of Mercy, what will I ask of you? Nothing else than mercy for miserable sinners. The great charity, says St. Bernard, which reigns in the heart of Mary for all, obliges her to open to all the bosom of mercy: "Sapientibus et insipientibus copiosissima charitate debetricem se fecit: omnibus misericordiæ suæ sinum aperit, ut de plenitudine ejus accipiant omnes."—Supra Sign. mag.

7. St. Bonaventure says, that looking at Mary, he appeared no longer to behold the divine justice which terrified him, but only the divine mercy which God has placed in the hands of Mary, that she may assist the miserable: "Certe, Domina, cum te aspicio, nihil nisi misericordiam cerno: nam miseris mater Dei facta es, et tibi officium miserendi commissum."—Stim. amor. And St. Leo has said, that Mary is so full of mercy, that she is called mercy itself: "Maria adeo prædita est misericordiæ dici promercatur."—Serm. de Nativ. Dom. And who, after Jesus, exclaims St. Germanus, is so solicitous for our welfare, as you, O Mother of Mercy? "Quis post filium tuum, gerit curam generis humani, sicut tu? Quis ita nos defendit in nostris afflictionibus? Quis pugnat pro peccatoribus? Propterea patrocinium tuum majus est quam apprehendi possit."—Serm. de Zona Virg. Speaking of Mary, St. Augustine says: "Unam ac

te solam pro nobis in cœlo fatemur esse sollicitam." —Apud S. Bon. in spec. lect. 6. As if he said: O Mother of God, it is true that all the saints love our salvation, but your charity, in assisting us from heaven, with so much love, and heaping on us so many graces, which you continually obtain for us, compels us to confess, that it is you alone who truly love us, and anxiously seek our welfare. St. Germanus adds: "Non est satietas defensionis ejus." Mary prays incessently for us; she repeats her prayers, and is never tired praying in our defence: "Non est satietas defensionis ejus."

8. Bernardine Da Bustius says, that Mary is more desirous of dispensing graces to us, than we are of receiving them: "Plus vult illa bonum tibi facere et gratiam largiri quam tu accipere concupiscas."—Marial. 1, serm. 5, de nom. Mar. The same author says, that as the devil, according to St. Peter, goes about seeking whom he may devour, (circuit quærens quem devoret—1 Pet., v. 8), so Mary goes about seeking whom she may save: "Ipsa semper circuit quærens quem salvet."—Ibid. part 3, serm. 3. Who, I ask, receives grace from Mary?—he who wishes for them. A holy soul used to say, to obtain graces through Mary, it is enough to ask them. And St. Ildephonsus has written, that we ought to ask nothing of Mary but to pray for us; for by her prayers, she will obtain for us, greater graces than we could ask: "Majori devotione orabit pro me quam ego auderem petire, et majora mihi impetrabit quam petere præsumam." How, then, does it happen that there are many who do not receive graces through the prayers of Mary? Because they do not wish for them. He who is attached to any passion, to self-interest, to ambition, to an inordinate affection, does not wish for grace to be delivered from it, and therefore he does not ask it: had he asked it of Mary, she would certainly have obtained it for him. But miserable and unhappy the man, said the Holy Virgin to St. Bridget, who, having it in his power to have recourse to me in this life, shall, through his own fault, remain miserably in his sins, and in the state of

perdition: "Ideo miser erit qui ad misericordem cum possit non accedit."—Revel., lib. 1, cap. 6. A time shall come when he would wish, but will not be able to have recourse to her.

9. Ah! let us not expose ourselves to this great danger. Let us always have recourse to this divine Mother, who knows not how to let any one who invokes her aid, depart without consolation. "Ita benigna est," says Blosius, "ut neminem tristem redire sinat."—Lib. 4, cap. 12. Mary is always ready, as Richard of St. Laurence says, to assist those who ask her prayers: "Invenies semper paratam auxiliari." According to Richard of St. Victor, Mary's tenderness prevents our supplications, and procures aid for us before we pray to her: "Velocius occurrit ejus pietas quam invocetur, et causas miserorum anticipat."—In Cant., cap. 23. Because, adds the same author, Mary is so full of mercy, that she cannot see our miseries without coming to our relief: "Adeo replentur ubera tua misericordia ut, alterius miseriæ notitia tacta, lac fundant misericordiæ; nec possis miserias scire et non subvenire."—Ibid. And who, exclaims Innocent III, has ever had recourse to Mary, without being heard? "Quis invocavit eam et non est exauditus ab ipsa."—Serm. 2, de Assumpt. B. V. Who, says Blessed Eutichianus, has ever sought her aid and has been abandoned by her? "Quis unquam, O Beata, fideliter omnipotentem tuam rogavit opem, et fuit derelictus? revera nullus unquam."—In vita S. Th. St. Bernard has written: "O holy Virgin, if a man has been ever found who after invoking your aid, remembers not to have obtained relief, I am satisfied that he should cease to praise your mercy: "Sileat misericordiam tuam, Virgo beata, qui in necessitatibus te invocatam meminerit defuisse."—Serm. 1, de Assumpt. No: such a case has never occurred, and never shall occur; for, says St. Bonaventure, Mary cannot but pity and relieve the miserable: "Ipsa enim non misereri ignorat, et miseris non satisfacere nunquam scivit." Hence the saint has said, that this Mother of mercy, who so ardently desires to assist us, and to see us saved, is

offended not only by those who do her a positive injury, but also by those who neglect to ask favours from her: "In te Domina, peccant non solum qui tibi injuriam irrogant, sed etiam qui te non rogant."—In Spec. Virg.

10. Let us, then, have recourse to Mary; and in seeing that our sins render us unworthy to be heard, let us not distrust her clemency. Our Lord revealed to St. Bridget, that Mary would have saved Lucifer by her intercession, if that haughty demon humbled himself and had recourse to her: "Etiam diabolo misericordiam exhiberet, si ille humiliter peteret." And the Virgin herself said to the same St. Bridget, that when a sinner cast himself at her feet, she regards not his sins but the intention with which he comes. If he come with a determination to change his life, she heals and saves him: "Quantumcunque homo peccet, si ex vera emendatione ad me reversus fuerit, statim parata sum recipere revertentem; nec attendo quantum peccaverit, sed cum quali voluntate venit; nam non dedignor ejus plagas ungere et sanare, quia vocor et vere sum mater misericordiæ." Hence St. Bonaventure called Mary the salvation of them who invoke her: "O salus te invocantium." He that has recourse to Mary shall be saved.

11. I repeat, then, let us always have recourse to this great Mother of God, imploring her to protect us. But the better to gain her protection, let us endeavour to perform in her honour as many pious exercises as we can. That ardently devoted servant of Mary, Brother John Berkmans, of the Society of Jesus, being asked at death by his companions, what they should do in order to obtain the favour of Mary, said: "Quidquid minimum, modo sit constans." Every little act of devotion is sufficient to secure the patronage of this divine Mother. She is content with any little exercise, provided it be constant; for, as St. Andrew of Crete says, she is so liberal that she is accustomed to reward the smallest homage by obtaining abundant graces: "Cum sit magnificentissima, solet maxima pro minimis reddere."—Orat. 2, de dorm. Virg. But we should not be content with small

things ; let us at least offer her all the acts of devotion which her clients ordinarily perform in her honour ; such as, to recite the Rosary every day, to perform the Novenas of her festivals, to fast on Saturday, to wear the Scapular, to visit some image every day in her honour, asking her to obtain some special grace, to read each day a book which treats of her praises, to salute her in leaving and returning home : rising in the morning and going to bed at night, to put ourselves under her protection, by saying three *Aves* in honour of her purity. Even seculars practice these devotions; but we priests can honour her much more by preaching her glories, and by inculcating to others the advantages of being devoted to her: "Qui elucidant me vitam æternam habebunt."—Eccle., xxiv. 31, She promises eternal life to him who endeavours in this life to make others know and love her. Blessed Edminco, Bishop, began every sermon by the praises of Mary. This was so pleasing to the divine Mother, that she one day said to St. Bridget, "Tell that prelate that I will be a mother to him, and that at death I will present his soul to my Son." Oh! what pleasure would a priest give to Mary, if every Saturday he made a short discourse to the people on devotion to her, and especially on her tender compassion for us, and her desire to assist all who pray to her. For, as St. Bernard says, it is the mercy of Mary that inspires in the people the greatest affection for her devotion. Let preachers at least endeavour in every sermon, before the conclusion, to exhort the hearers to have recourse to most holy Mary, and to ask some favour from her. In a word, Richard of St. Laurence says that he who honours Mary acquires treasures of eternal life: "Honorare Mariam est thesaurizare vitam æternam."—De Laud. Virg., lib. 2. For this purpose I published some years since, a book intitled the *Glories of Mary ;* and I endeavoured to enrich it with authorities from Scriptures, and the holy Fathers, with examples and devout practices, not only that it might be useful to all as a book for spiritual reading, but particularly that it might supply priests with abundant matter for

preaching the praises of Mary, and inspiring the people with devotion to her.

ON THE DIVINE OFFICE.

They who are deputed by the Church to recite the Divine Office, perform two great and important duties: they praise and honour God, and, at the same time, supplicate the divine mercies for the entire Christian world. In the first place, then, by the Divine Office we honour the supreme Majesty of our God. "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me: and there is the way by which I will show him the salvation of God."—Ps. xlix. 23. I, says the Lord, declare that I am honoured by all who offer me the sacrifice of praise; and that there they shall find the way to obtain eternal salvation. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi was filled with consolation, and instantly ran to the choir, as soon as she heard the signal for the office, imagining that she was called to perform the office of the angels, whose constant occupation is to praise God. The object of the Church in appointing her ministers to sing the divine praises, has been to make men on earth unite with the blessed in heaven, in paying honour to their common Creator.

Sed illa sedes cœlitum
Semper exultat laudibus;
Illi canentes jungimur
Almæ Sionis æmuli.

St. Gregory Nazianzen says that the singing of the Psalms is the prelude to the praises with which the saints honour God in heaven: "Psalmorum cantus illius (cœlestis) hymnodiæ præludium est."—Or. 40, in fin. Hence, as Tertullian says, by reciting the canonical hours we, as it were, acquire the possession of paradise; because we perform the office of the citizens of that land of bliss. Hence St. Catherine

of Bologna felt such intense joy in reciting the Office that she desired to die in the act of chanting the Psalms.

In the second place, by the Office we thank God for the graces which he continually dispenses to men, and we obtain the divine mercies for sinners. All the faithful should be continually employed in thanking the Lord for his benefits; and since all who live on this earth are always in need of the divine aid to resist the attacks of the enemy, and to obtain eternal life, they should unceasingly implore by their prayers the succours of his mercy. But because seculars are too much distracted with worldly business, the holy Church has deputed her ministers to pray every hour in the day in her name, and in the name of the entire people of Christ. Hence the Office has been divided into seven canonical hours, that there may be persons to pray for all, and to pray in the best way in which prayer can be offered. For, according to the words of Isaias, ("Verba mea quæ posui in ore tuo."—lix. 21.) the Divine office is nothing else than a memorial which God himself has composed that he may the more speedily hear our prayers and relieve our necessities. Like a prince who desires to raise his subjects from their miseries, the Lord himself has drawn up our petition, that we may pray to him as we ought, and that thus he may be the better able to console us. A hundred private prayers can never have the efficacy of a single petition presented in the Divine office; for, the latter is offered in the name of the whole Church, and in God's own words. Hence St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that in comparison of the office, every other prayer or devotion has but little merit and efficacy before God. Let us be persuaded that, after the holy sacrifice of the Mass, there is no greater treasure than the divine office, from which we may every day draw rivers of graces.

But St. Gregory says, that true prayer consists not only in the articulation of the words, but also in the attention of the heart; for to obtain the divine graces our good desires have greater efficacy than mere words: "Vera supplicatio non est in vocibus sed in

cogitationibus cordis ; valentiores namque voces apud aures Dei non faciunt verba nostra sed desideria."—Moral., lib. 22, cap. 13. If we wish to please God we must imitate the apostle, and pray not only with the tongue, but also with the spirit and the understanding: "Psallam spiritu, psallam et mente."—1 Cor., xiv. 15.

Oh! if all priests and religious said the Office as they ought, it is certain that the Church should not be in the deplorable state in which we see it. How many sinners should be rescued from the slavery of the devil? how many souls should love God with greater fervour? If they said the Office as they ought, priests themselves should not be always the same—always imperfect, prone to anger, greedy, attached to self-interest, and to vanities. The Lord has promised to hear every one who prays to him: "Omnis enim qui petit, accipit."—Luc., xi. 10. How, then, does it happen that certain priests say a thousand prayers every day in the Divine Office which they recite, and that they are never heard? that they are always so weak, and so prone to relapse, not only into light faults, (which they commit habitually, without sorrow for them, and without any effort to correct them,) but also into grievous transgressions against charity, and other virtues? Miserable men! in reciting the Hours they pronounce a malediction against themselves when they say: "Maledicti qui declinant a mandatis tuis." And what is worse, such priests feel but little remorse for their sins, and excuse themselves saying that they, too, are flesh like all others, and that they cannot restrain their passions. But if they recite the Office, not as they say it with distractions and irreverence, but with devotion and recollection, uniting the affections of the heart with so many petitions which they present to God, they should certainly not be so weak as they are, but would acquire fervour and strength to resist all temptations, and to lead a life worthy of priests.

But, says St. Gregory, how can the Lord hear the petition of him who knows not what he asks, and does not even desire to be heard? "Illam orationem

non audit Deus cui qui orat non intendit."—Apud S. Thom., 2. 2. qu. 83, art. 12. And how, adds St. Cyprian, can you expect to be heard when you do not hear yourself? "Quomodo te audiri postulas, cum te ipsum non audias?"—Serm. de orat. dom. The apostle says that no fruit can be expected from the prayer which is pronounced with the tongue without the attention of the mind: "Si orem lingua.....mens autem mea sine fructu est."—1 Cor., xiv. 14. As prayer made with attention and devotion, is the odoriferous incense which is so agreeable to God, and obtains so many treasures of graces, so, on the other hand, prayers said with indevotion and distraction, are a fetid smoke which provokes the divine wrath, and merits chastisement from God.

Of this God complained one day to St. Bridget, saying that some priests lose so much time every day in conversing with friends on worldly affairs, and afterwards in conversing with him while they recite the Office, they are so hurried that they dishonour him more than they glorify him. Hence St. Augustine said that the barking of dogs is more pleasing to God than the chant of such priests. O God, how great would be the indignation of a prince if he saw a vassal, in the very act of begging a favour, inattentive, conversing with others, thinking of other things, and therefore ignorant of what he was saying? Hence, according to the angelic doctor, a person cannot be excused from sin, if he voluntarily allows his mind to wander even during prayer which is not of obligation; for he appears to treat God with contempt, just as a person who speaks to others without attending to what he says, is guilty of disrespect towards them: "Non est absque peccato, quod aliquis orando evagationem mentis patiatur; videtur enim contemnere Deum, sicuti si alicui homini loqueretur et non attendit ad ea quæ ipse profert."—2. 2. p. 83, art. 12.

Alas! may not the Lord complain of some priests, as he once did of the Jews "Populus hic labiis me honorat: cor autem eorum longe est a me."—Mat., xv. 8. May we not apply to certain ecclesiastics, the words of Peter de Blois: "Labia sunt in canticis, et

animus in patinis."—Serm. 59, ad Sacerd. Their lips are in the psalms, but their heart is in the dishes, employed in thinking how they can best gratify the palate, vanity, the desire of riches, or of other worldly goods. The Council of Treveri says: "Quid est voce psallere, mente autem domum aut forum circuire, nisi homines fallere et Deum irridere?"—Cap. 6, de hor. canon. To chant with the tongue, and at the same time to wander, in mind, about the houses and streets, is nothing else than to deceive men, by making them believe that you praise God, while you mock him: speaking to him with the lips, while the heart neither praises him, nor prays to him, but is totally occupied with other objects. Hence, because in order to obtain the divine graces, it is necessary to pray with attention and with fervour, St. Basil justly concludes, that he who prays with a wandering mind, shall not obtain the gifts of God, but will provoke his divine wrath still more: "Divinum auxilium est implorandum non remisse nec mente huc vel illuc evagante: eo quod talis non solum non impetrabit, sed magis Dominum irridebit."—Serm. de orando Deo.

The Lord has said, by the prophet Malachy, that he curses the praises offered by priests who bless him only with the tongue, while their heart is occupied, not in giving him honour and glory, but in attending to other things. "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is to you...If you will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of Hosts... I will curse your blessings."—Mal., ii. 1, 2. Hence, on the miserable priest who says the office with such distraction and irreverence, shall fall the malediction pronounced by the psalmist: "May the devil stand at his right hand. When he is judged may he go out condemned: and may his prayer be turned to sin."—Ps. cviii. 6, 7. When a priest recites the divine praises, muttering or truncating the words, and with a mind dissipated and distracted with the affairs of the world and earthly pleasures, then the devil stands at his right hand: his reward for such an Office, shall be his eternal condemnation, since his very prayer is imputed to him as a sin, on account of the

unworthy manner in which he has said it. This is precisely the meaning of the words: *and may his prayer be turned to sin.*

Hence. while we recite the Office, the devil endeavours, with all his might, to place before the eyes of the mind, so many objects, desires, and thoughts of the world, that being occupied with them, we may lose all the fruit which we might draw from the office, and render ourselves guilty before God, by the disrespect with which we treat him. Hence, we should make every effort to recite the divine praises with the proper attention. A wise religious used to say, that if it be necessary, we ought to abridge the time of mental prayer, in order to give more time to the Office, and recite it with suitable devotion. In the rules of the Carthusians we read: "Spiritus Sanctus gratum non recipit quidquid aliud quam quod debes, obtuleris, neglecto eo quod debes."—Statut. Carth. part 3. God does not accept any other devotion which you offer him, if you neglect that to which you are obliged.

But let us come to the practice of reciting the Office with the proper attention and devotion. Above all, says St. John Chrysostom, we should, in entering the church, or in taking up the Breviary to recite the Divine Office, leave at the door, and dismiss from the mind, all worldly thoughts: "Ne quis ingrediatur templum curis onustus mundanis: hæc ante ostium deponamus."—Hom. 2, c. 5, Isa. This is precisely the admonition of the Holy Ghost: "Ante orationem præpara animam tuam."—Eccl., xviii. 23. Consider that then the church obliges you, as her minister, to praise the Lord, and to supplicate his divine mercies for all men. Imagine that the angels assist, (as they once appeared to Blessed Ermand,) with thuribles in their hands to offer your prayers to God, as an odoriferous incense of holy affections. "Dirigatur, says the psalmist, "oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo."—Ps., cxl. 2. Hence the apostle St. John saw the angels, "having.....golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints."—Apoc., v. 8. In a word, consider that you are going to speak to God, and to treat with him concerning your own wel-

fare, and that of the whole church; and remember that he, then, regards you with special love, and that his ears are more open than at other times, to the petitions which you then present.

At the commencement of the Office, offer to his honour, the praises which you are going to recite, and beg of him to deliver you from distractions, and to give you light and aid to praise him, and to pray to him as you ought; and for this purpose, recite with great attention, the usual prayer: "Aperi Domine, os meum ad benedicendum," &c. In beginning the Office be not, as some are, in a hurry to finish it as soon as possible: would to God they were not the greater number! Oh! my God! we undertake the labour, we say the Office; and will we, in order to save the little additional time necessary for the devout recitation of it, give displeasure to you, and lose the graces and merits which we may gain by reciting the Office with the requisite attention?

We should also recite the Office in a decent and modest posture. If we will not say it kneeling, or standing, let us, at least, be careful to recite it sitting in a becoming posture. It is related, that while two religious recited matins in a reclining posture, a devil appeared, caused an intolerable stench, and through mockery said, to the prayer which you offer, such incense is suited: "Ad talem orationem tale debetur incensum."—Jordan de Saxon. in vit. erem. lib. 2, cap. 15. It will contribute greatly to devotion in reciting the Office, to remain before the images of Jesus crucified, and of most holy Mary, that by occasionally looking at them, we may be able to renew our intention, and to excite devout affections. If you wish to draw great fruit from the Office, be careful, in reciting the psalms, to renew you attention and affections from time to time, that your devotion, which gradually grows cold unless frequent efforts be made to inflame it, may not be entirely extinguished. "Ne quod tepescere cœperat," says St. Augustine, "omnino frigescat, et penitus extinguatur, nisi crebrius inflammetur."—Ep. 130, ad Probam c. 9. You are already aware that there are three kinds of attention

with which the Office may be recited. I speak here of internal attention, for with regard to external attention, we must abstain from every action which is incompatible with internal attention, such as writing, speaking to others, or intentionally listening to them, and all similar occupations which require much application of the mind. It is also necessary to remark, that, according to theologians, they who recite the Office in the street, or in any other distracting place, are in great danger of not fulfilling their obligation. But, as the theologians, along with St. Thomas, teach, there may be three sorts of internal attention, viz.: to the words, to the sense, and to God. "Triplex est attentio," says the holy doctor, "quæ orationi vocali potest adhiberi: una quidem qua attenditur ad verba, ne aliquis in eis erret: secunda qua attenditur ad sensum verborum: tertia qua attenditur ad finem orationis, scilicet ad Deum et ad rem pro qua oratur."—2, 2, q. 83, a. 3.

The first is attention to the words, by which a person takes care to pronounce all the words and syllables distinctly. The second is attention to the sense, and consists in attending to the signification of the words, in order to unite with it the affections of the heart. The third, which is the most perfect, is attention to God, and consists in directing the mind to God during prayer, by acts of adoration, thanksgiving, or love; or by petitions for his graces. The first sort of attention, if from the beginning there had been an intention of praying, is sufficient to fulfil the obligation of the Office; for, as St. Thomas teaches in another place, the church requires nothing more. "Prima," says the holy doctor, "est attentio ad verba quibus petimus: deinde ad petitionem ipsam: et quæcumque earum attentionum adsit, non est reputanda inattenta oratio."—In 4, dist. 15, qu. 1, solut. 5. But he who says the Office barely with attention to the word, without any attention to the sense, or to God, will never say it with devotion, nor with much fruit, nor without many defects. What fruit can the priest draw from the Office who attends only to the recitation of it with the tongue; and who, like

a man oppressed by a heavy load, or like a person who does violence to himself in order to swallow a nauseous draught, seeks to finish it as soon as he can in order to get rid of the burden? It would be still worse, if, while he is engaged in reciting the Office, he allows himself to be dissipated, or to look about at distracting objects, or to speak occasionally to others. St. Bonaventure relates, (Spec. disc. part. 1, c. 16,) that in Paris, while a good priest was saying the Office, a prelate asked a question regarding a certain matter. In reply, the priest said, that he was speaking to a more exalted personage, and that, therefore, he could not, then, give him the information he wanted; and bowing down his head, he continued to recite the Office. The same Saint also relates, in the same place, that another ecclesiastic was condemned to a severe purgatory, in punishment of interruptions in the Office.

I do not say that we should be disturbed, or afflicted at the involuntary distractions which molest us during the Office. As long as they are not voluntary, they are not sinful. The Lord compassionates our weakness: distracting thoughts often enter the mind without any fault on our part, and, therfore, they cannot hinder the fruit of the prayer which we present. "In spiritu et in veritate," says the angelic doctor, "qui ex instinctu spiritus ad orandum accedit, etiamsi ex infirmitate aliqua mens postmodum evagetur."—2. 2, qu. 83, a. 4, ad 1. He adds, that even souls, wrapped up in contemplation, cannot remain long on high, but are brought down, by the weight of human misery, to the state of involuntary distractions: "Mens humana diu stare in alto non potest: pondere enim infirmitatis humanæ deprimitur ad inferiora. Et ideo contingit quod, cum mens orantis ascendit in Deum per contemplationem, subito evagetur."—Loco. cit. ad 2.

On the other hand, the holy doctor says, that he who is voluntarily distracted during the time of prayer, can neither be excused from sin, nor derive fruit from his prayers: "Si quis ex proposito in oratione mente evagatur, hoc peccatum est et impedit orationis fructum."—Ibid. ad 3. The words *ex proposito*, as theo-

logians commonly say, mean when a person adverts that he is distracted, and voluntarily contiues distracted. Against wilful distractions, St. Cyprian exclaims, and says that it is an intolerable disrespect in the eyes of God, to think of other things during prayer, as if anything were of greater importance than to converse with God in order to implore his graces: "Quæ segnitia est alienari, cum Dominum præcaris, quasi sit aliud quod debeas magis, cogitare quam cum Deo loquaris?"—De orat. Dom. Hence St. Bernard has written: "Voluntas neglecta facit cogitationes indignas Deo: pia efficaces ad fructum spiritus." As the will gives efficacy to our prayers to obtain spiritual fruits, so voluntary negligence renders them unworthy of God, and therefore deserving, not of favours, but of chastisements.

In the Cistercian Chronicles, we read of the celebrated vision which St. Bernard had one night, while he chanted the psalms in choir, along with his monks. Beside each monk, he saw an angel writing. Some of the angels wrote in letters of gold, others in letters of silver, others with ink, others with water, and some held a pen in the hand without writing at all. Our Lord, afterwards, gave the Saint to understand, that the letters of gold signified the fervour of charity with which some of the monks recited the Office: the letters of silver represented prayers said with devotion, but with less fervour: the letters written in ink denoted the attention to the words, without devotion: the letters of water indicated the negligence of those who were distracted, and paid but little attention to the words which they pronounced with the tongue: the angels who were not writing at all, denoted the irreverence of those who were voluntarily distracted. St. Robert, the Abbot, had another vision. He saw the devil going about the choir; when he found any one drowsy, he laughed at him; when he found a monk distracted, he exulted, and by his exultation showed, that in such a person, he had gained a great deal.

Dearly beloved priest, when you take the Breviary in your hand, imagine that an angel stands on one side, to

register your merits in the book of life, if you say the Office with devotion: and on the other, a devil, who, if you recite it with distraction, writes your faults in the book of death. With this thought, excite yourself to say the Office with the greatest possible devotion. Endeavour, then, not only at the beginning of the Office, but also at the commencement of each psalm, to renew your attention, that you may be able to recite in your heart, all the sentiments which you shall read. "Cum oratis Deum," says Cassian, "hoc versetur in corde quod profertur in ore."—Coll. 25, cap. 7. Hence, St. Augustine says: "Si psalmus orat, orate: si gemit, gemite, si sperat, sperate."—In Ps., 30. The angelic doctor has remarked, that pious words, uttered with the lips, excite devotion in the soul: "Verba significantia aliquid ad devotionem pertinens, excitant mentes."—2, 2, q. 83, art. 12, ad 2. He means that God has taught us to pray in words, that in reciting our prayers, we may apply the mind to ask what we pronounce with the tongue. This is what we find in the celebrated Canon (Dolentes) of the fifth Council of Lateran, in which it is prescribed, that the Office be recited "*studiose et devote quantum Deus dederit:*" "*studiose*," by pronouncing the words distinctly: "*devote*," by uniting the heart with the sentiments expressed. We must be persuaded of the truth of what St. Augustine says, viz: that we obtain the graces which we desire for ourselves and for others, more by the groans of the heart, than by the words of the mouth: "Hoc negotium plus gemitibus quam sermonibus agitur."—Ad Probam. Ep. 122, c. 10.

Cassian relates, that the monks of Egypt used to say, that it is more useful to chant ten verses with devotion, and with proper pauses, than an entire psalm with distraction of mind: "Utilius habent decem versus cum rationabili assignatione cantari quam totum psalmum cum confusione mentis effundi"—Ins. lib. 2, c. 11. Oh! what a multitude of lights and graces are received from the psalms, when they are said with the proper pauses, and attention! "Psalmus," says St. Epiphanius, "mentes illuminat, in cœlum reducit, homines familiares Deo reddit, animam lætifi-

cat."—Tom. 1, pag. 54. The psalm illumines the mind, delights the soul, directs her to heaven, and renders her the familiar of God.

It is true that many passages of the psalms are obscure and hard to be understood, without the aid of a comment. But many other passages are clear, and calculated to enliven our faith, to excite confidence, love for God, and good desires. They enliven our faith, by placing before our eyes the eternal truths of the existence of God, of the creation of the world, of the last things, of the immortality of the soul. What strength does not our faith receive from the many predictions, which are found in the psalms, of the great work of our redemption, and which were made so many ages before the event? David foretold, in many places, the coming of the Redeemer: "Redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis."—Ps., xxx. 6. Redemptionem misit populo suo.—Ps., cx. 9. Copiosa apud eum redemptio.—Ps., cxxix. 7. He predicted several things regarding the passion of the Saviour. He foretold the council of the chief priests who assembled to plan the death of Jesus Christ: "Principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus.—Ps., ii. 2. He foretold the crucifixion: "Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos: dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea."—Ps., xxi. 18. He foretold the distribution of his garments among the executioners, and the casting of lots for his interior garment, which was seamless: "Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea et super vestem meam miserunt sortem."—Ps., xxi. 19. He predicted the thirst of Jesus Christ, and the gall mixed with honey, which his enemies gave him to drink: "Et dederunt in escam meam fel et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto."—Ps., lxviii. 22. He, in fine, predicted the conversion of the Gentiles: "Convertentur ad Dominum universæ fines terræ: et adorabunt in conspectu ejus universæ familiæ gentium."—Ps., xxi. 28.

How many beautiful affections of confidence in God, do we find in the psalms? "In te, Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum. (Ps., xxx. 2.) In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum.—Ibid. Quo-

niam in me speravit liberabo eum.—Ps., xc. 14. Laudans invocabo Dominum et ab inimicis meis salvus ero.—Ps., xvii. 4. Protector est omnium sperantium in se.—Ib. Dominus firmamentum meum et refugium meum et liberator meus.—Ib. Vivet anima mea et laudabit te.—Ps., cxviii. 175. Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.—Ps., lxxxviii. 2. Spiritus tuus bonus deducet me in terram rectam.—Ps., cxlii. 10. Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea quem timebo?—Ps., xxvi. 1. Sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit.—Ps., xxxi. 10. Fiat misericordia tua Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.—Ps., xxxii. 22.

Hence many acts of love are contained in the psalms! Diligam te Domine fortitudo mea.—Ps., xvii. 2. Quid mihi est in cœlo? Et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei et pars mea in æternum.—Ps., lxxii. 25. Sitivit in te anima mea quam multipliciter tibi caro mea."—Ps., lxii. 2. Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.—Ps., xvi. 15. Confiteantur tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur tibi populi omnes.—Ps., lxvi. 4. Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum.—Ps., xxxiii. 4. Memor fui Dei et delectatus sum.—Ps., lxxvi. 4. Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.—Ps. cvii. 2. Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.—Ps., xli. 1. Quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?—Ib.

How many acts of thanksgiving? Quid retribuam Domino, pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi.—Ps., cxv. 12. Venite, audite et narrabo, omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit animæ meæ.—Ps., lxv. 16. How many acts of humility? Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea.—Ps., xciii. 17. Eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori.—Ps., lxxxv. 13. Et non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens.—Ps., cxlii. 2. Ego autem sum vermis et non homo, opprobrium hominum et abjectio plebis.—Ps., xxi. 7. Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit, quære servum tuum.—Ps., cxviii. 176. How many acts of repentance? Iniquitatem odio habui et abominatus sum.—

Ps., cxviii. 163. Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei, quia non custodierunt legem tuam.—Ib. Fuerunt mihi lachrymæ mea panes die ac nocte, dum dicitur mihi quotide: ubi est Deus tuus?—Ps., xli. 4. How many good purposes? Et custodiam legem tuam semper.—Ps., cxviii. 44. In æternum non obliviscar justificationes tuus.—Ib. Juravi et statui custodire judicia justitiæ.—Ib. Ab omni via mala prohibui pedes meos, ut custodiam verba tua.—Ib. Legem tuam in medio cordis mei.—Ps., xxxix. 9. Docebo iniquos vias tuas.—Ps., 1. 15.

Almost all the psalms are full of holy petitions. How many beautiful prayers are there in the Fiftieth Psalm? "Miserere mei Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis. Cor mundum crea in me Deus. Ne projicias me a facia tua. Spiritu principali confirma me." How many petitions in the Hundred and Eighteenth Psalms which is recited every day in the Small Hours? "Doce me justificationes tuas. Revela oculos meos. Viam iniquitatis amove a me. Averte oculos meos ne videant vanitatem. Da mihi intellectum ut discam mandata tua. Fiat misericordia tua ut consoletur me. Non confundas me ab expectatione mea. Adjuva me et salvus ero. Suscipe servum tuum in bonum. Aspice in me et miserere mei. Intellectum da mihi et vivam. Gressus meos dirige secundum eloquium tuum. Clamavi ad te salvum me fac, ut custodiam mandata tua. Vide humilitatem meam, et eripe. Intret postulatio mea in conspectu tuo. Tuus sum ego salvum me fac. Fiat manus tua, ut salvet me.—Doce me facere voluntatem tuam."—cxlii. 9. With regard to the passages which are obscure, I do not say that there is an obligation of studying the interpreters; but I say that such study is one of the most pious and useful studies to which a priest can apply. "Interpretationem," says the Council of Milan, "studio adsequatur, unde mens animusque ad aliquem salutarem effectum incendatur."—Syn. mediol. 5, part. 3. Hence it would be very useful to read Cardinal Bellarmine on the Psalms.

The prayers which are most pleasing to God, are

the petitions of the *Pater Noster;* which is the most excellent of all prayers, and which Jesus Christ has taught us by his own mouth. Hence the holy Church prescribes the frequent repetition of it in the office. How beautiful are the three first petitions, which are, at the same time, most perfect acts of love: "Sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum; fiat valuntas tua sicut in cœlo et in terra." In the first, "Sanctificetur nomen tuum," we implore of God to make all men know and love him. In the second, "adveniat regnum tuum," we ask him to take possession of our whole hearts, reigning in them here by his grace, and hereafter by glory. In the third, "fiat voluntas tua," &c., we ask the gift of perfect conformity, so as to do his will on earth as the saints do it in heaven. In repeating the *Gloria Patri* so often, how many devout affections may we excite of faith, of praise, of thanksgiving, and of complacency in the felicity and perfections of God? St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi imagined every time she said the *Gloria Patri*, that in bowing her head she offered it to the executioner in honour of the faith. The holy Church also commands us in the beginning of each of the Hours of the Office, to salute and invoke Mary the Mother of God. How many graces may we, then, obtain through the intercession of her who is the treasurer and dispenser of all the divine mercies?

I conclude. Many priests esteem and call the obligation of the Divine Office a great burden, and I say that they who say it with irreverence, without devotion, and with an eagerness to finish it, have just reason to call the Office a heavy burden; for they have to toil at least for an hour in reciting it without relish, and with great pain. But to good priests who say it with devotion, tasting so many sentiments of devotion, which are there expressed, and exciting in the heart the holy affections and petitions which are there presented to God, the office is not a burden but a source of spiritual comfort and delight; and should it ever be called a burden, it is the burden which raises and unites us to God.

CONSIDERATIONS AND AFFECTIONS PREPARATORY TO MASS.

FIRST CONSIDERATION.

For Sunday.

"De stercore erigens pauperem ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui."—Ps. cxii. 8. Consider, dearly beloved priest, that God could not exault you more in this world than he has done. And to what greater height could God raise you than to make you on earth his own minister in what concerns his greatest glory? He has permitted you to ascend the altar and offer in sacrifice his own very Son. How many selections must he have made in order to make you a priest? He has taken you from among numberless possible creatures, and has placed you in this world. Afterwards he chose you from so many millions of heretics and infidels; placed you in the true Church; made you a Christian and a Catholic, and from so many millions of the faithful he has made you a priest.

Ah! if God had honoured with the priesthood only one man in the world, and had given to him alone, the power to call down the Incarnate Word from heaven, and to deliver souls from hell by absolving them from sin, how great would be the esteem of all for such a priest? What thanksgivings would not he render to God? What would he not do for the love of that God who had selected him from among men for so great an honour? But, dearly beloved priest, consider that the number of priests does not diminish your dignity and obligation.

Justly, then, does God demand of every priest to belong to him without reserve. In the Scriptures the priest is called *a man of God;* a man who belongs to God alone. The priests of the Old Law stretched forth their hands over the victims, to show that they offered in sacrifice their own lives, as the sacrificed the lives of the animals which they immolated; and

in like manner, the priests of the New Law, by extending their hands over the *Oblata*, signify that in union with the life of Jesus Christ, whom they offer in the holy sacrifice, they ought also to offer their own lives, and their entire being to God.

Behold, you have already ascended the altar where, by pronouncing a few words, you call the Divine Word into your hands; and by your words change the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. You also go to the altar as an ambassador of the whole human race, to intercede before God for the Church and for all men. Prepare yourself, then, by the following

AFFECTIONS.

My God, in me have been verified in a special manner, the words of David: "De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui." Behold, I, a miserable sinner, who deserved to be for so many years confined in hell under the feet of the devils, abandoned for ever by all, and by you, my dear Lord, now approach to celebrate, that is, to offer in sacrifice your own very Son. Behold, in a few moments my words will make the Eternal Word descend on the altar, and into my hands, that I may offer him to you, and eat his sacred flesh.

O God of my soul! I, a priest—I who have so often turned my back upon you—I who have exchanged your friendship, renounced your grace and your love for a little smoke, or for a momentary, poisoned pleasure—and how have you been able to select me for your priest, from among so many innocent and faithful souls?

Ah! Lord, enlighten me—increase my faith! *Noverim te, noverim me.* Make me understand what you are who wish to give yourself to me this morning, and what I am that am going to receive you. Ah! through the merits of your blood, wash my soul from so many stains before I ascend the altar. My Jesus! before you come into my hands and into my breast, pardon me. I have offended and displeased you, O sovereign Good: I am sorry with my whole soul.

I believe, my Redeemer, that you are the Son of God; that you have died for me, and left yourself in the most holy sacrament to be offered in sacrifice by priests, and to become our food. Through your passion and your promises I hope for grace to love you always for the future, and to possess you for eternity. I love you, my dear Redeemer, I love you more than myself; and because I love you, I am sorry with my whole heart for all my sins, because by them I have offended you, who are infinite Goodness.

[These four acts, viz., of faith, hope, love, and contrition, should, when convenient, be made every day immediately before celebrating Mass, even though you had prievously made mental prayer.]

I love you, my God, but I love you too little. I would wish to love you as much as a priest ought to love you. I would wish to receive you with the love with which so many enamoured souls love you. Ah! inflame me with your holy love, and make me all yours.

Eternal Father, I offer you this sacrifice in thanksgiving for all the benefits conferred on men, particularly on the holy humanity of Jesus Christ, on the Blessed Virgin, on my angel Guardian, and on all my holy advocates; and through the merits of your Son, I ask holy perseverance, your holy love, and all the other graces which Jesus, Mary, and all my holy advocates ask for me.

The priest will do well to recommend in the Mass, those who are mentioned in the following *Mementos*.

MEMENTO FOR THE LIVING.

1. I recommend to you the sovereign Pontiff, and all prelates, confessors, preachers, and priests; give them, O Lord, zeal and fervour, that they may labour for the salvation of souls.

2. I recommend my relatives, friends, and enemies; those who are about to depart from this world; the souls in purgatory, and all Christians who are in the state of grace: give them, O Lord, perseverance and fervour in your love.

3. I recommend to you infidels, heretics, and sinners. Give them light and strength that they may all know and love you.

MEMENTO FOR THE DEAD.

1. I recommend to you the souls of my relatives, benefactors, friends, and enemies; and the souls of those who are in purgatory on my account.

2. I recommend to you the souls of priests, and particularly of those who have worked in your vineyard.

3. I recommend to you the souls of those who have been most devoted to the passion of Jesus Christ, to the most holy sacrament, and to the divine Mother; the souls that are most forgotten, that suffer the greatest pains, and that are nearest to the end of their purgation.

[These mementos may be made every day at least by intending to recommend to God all that are here mentioned.]

SECOND CONSIDERATION.

For Monday.

"Hoc facite in meam commemorationem."—Lucæ., xxii. 19. Learned theologians infer from these words that priests are bound in celebrating Mass, to remember the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The apostle seems to require the same of all who receive the holy communion: "Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis."—1 Cor., xi. 26. According to St. Thomas, the Redeemer has left us the most holy sacrament that we might preserve a continual remembrance of the benefits which he has obtained for us, and of the love which he has shown us by dying for our salvation. "Ut autem tanti beneficii jugis in nobis maneret memoria, corpus suum in cibum, et sanguinem in potum fidelibus dereliquit."—Op. 57, lect. 3. Hence the same holy doctor has called the sacrament of the altar *a memorial of the passion.*

Consider, then, beloved priest, that the sacred victim which you are going to immolate, is the same Lord who has given his blood and his life for you.

But the Mass is not only a commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, but it is the same sacrifice; for the priest who offers it, and the victim offered, are the same; that is, the Incarnate Word. The mode of offering only is different. In the former, blood was shed, but not in the latter; in the former Christ died really, in the latter he dies mystically. "Una enim," says the Council of Trent, "eademque est hostia.....sola offerendi ratione diversa."—Sess. 22, c. 2. Imagine yourself, then, during the Mass to stand on Calvary, offering to God the blood and the life of his Son; and at the communion imagine that you receive his precious blood from the wounds of the Saviour.

Consider, also, that in each Mass is renewed the work of redemption; so that if Jesus Christ had not once died on the cross, the world would obtain from the celebration of Mass the same benefits which the death of the Redeemer merited for us. "Tantum valet," said the *Disciple*, "celebration Missæ, quantum mors Christi in cruce." Thus by means of the sacrifice of the altar, all the merits of the passion are applied to men, and more abundantly to the priest who offers it.

Hence St. Francis of Assisium (who considered himself unworthy to ascend to the priesthood, and therefore refused to become a priest,) admonishes priests to detach themselves from every thing worldly, and to seek only to love and honour their God who has loved and honoured them so much; and, he adds, that great indeed is the infelicity of the priest who, while he has Jesus so near him on the altar, entertains an attachment to any worldly object. "Videte, sacerdotes (these are the words of the saint,) dignitatem vestram; et sicut super omnes propter hoc mysterium honoravit vos Dominus, ita et vos diligite eum et honorate. Magna infirmitas quando Jesum sic præsentem habetis, et aliud in toto mundo curatis."

AFFECTIONS.

Lord, I am not worthy to appear before you; but animated by your goodness, which in spite of my unworthiness, has chosen me for your priest, I come this morning to offer you your own Son. I offer, then, to you the immaculate Lamb in atonement for my own sins, and for the sins of all men. *Ecce agnus Dei.* Behold the Lamb whom you saw one day immolated on the altar of the cross for your glory, and for our salvation. For the sake of this victim, so dear to you, apply his merits to my soul, and pardon all the grievous and venial offences I have hitherto offered to you. I repent of them with my whole heart, because by them I have offended you, who are infinite Goodness.

And you, O my Jesus, come and wash in your blood all the stains of my sins before I receive you this morning. "Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea." I am not worthy to receive you, but you, O celestial Physician, are able to heal all my wounds with a single word. Come and heal me.

"Erravi sicut ovis quæ periit." I am that sheep that has voluntarily gone astray, and fled from you, O my Redeemer, but you are the good pastor that have given your life for my salvation: "Quære servum tuum quia mandata tua non sum oblitus." Seek after me, O my Jesus; do not abandon me; seek me and bind me on your shoulders. I purpose to serve and love you according to the best of my ability.

You have said: "Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt .....et non rapiet eas quisquam de manu mea." You call me to your love; behold I give up all things and come to you, my life. I wish to obey you in all things. I renounce all the pleasures of the world since you condescend to give me this morning your sacred flesh for the food of my soul.

I love you, O my Jesus, above all things, and desire to receive you in order to love you more tenderly. You give yourself entirely to me. I give myself

without reserve to you. You shall be for ever my all, my only good, my only love.

O Mary, my mother obtain for me a portion of that humility and fervour with which you received Jesus in your holy communions.

THIRD CONSIDERATION.

For Tuesday.

"Hic est filius meus dilectus in quo mihi complacui." —Mat., xvii. 5. In the Old Law men honoured God by so many sacrifices, but in the New Law he has received greater honour from a single Mass than from all the ancient sacrifices, which were but a figure and shadow of our sacrifice of the altar. By the holy Mass God is honoured as much as he deserves to be honoured; for in the Mass is renewed the same infinite honour which Jesus Christ gave to God by sacrificing himself on the cross. A single Mass gives more honour to God than he has ever received, or will ever receive, from all the prayers or penitential rigours of the saints, from all the labours of the apostles, all the pains of the martyrs, and all the burning ardours of the seraphs, and of the divine Mother. This honour, O priest, God wishes to receive from your hands this morning.

It is also just, that a thanksgiving should be rendered to God for all the immense benefits which his infinite goodness has bestowed upon us. But what adequate thanksgiving can we who are so miserable, offer to him? Had the Lord only once exhibited a mere mark of affection, he would even for that merit infinite thanksgiving; because that affection would be a favour and a gift of an infinite God. But behold he has given us the means of not being confounded by so many obligations, and of thanking him as he deserves. And how? By offering to him Jesus Christ in the Mass. We thus render him full thanksgiving and satisfaction.

This great victim which is offered to him, is his own Son, in whom he finds his delight. This sacrifice is

the sacrifice of the life of a God, who in the consecration and communion is immolated by a mystical death. Thus David thanked God for all the favours bestowed upon him: "Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam."—Ps., cxv. 12. And thus Jesus himself thanked his divine Father for the benefits conferred on men: "Et accepto calice, gratias egit et dixit: Accipite et dividite inter vos."—Luc., xxii. 17.

AFFECTIONS.

Ah! my God and my Creator, how have you ever been able to choose me to honour you by means of the sacrifice of your Son, after I had so much dishonoured you by the injuries I have done you? Instead of chastising me with hell, you have conferred on me the honour of making me a priest, the minister of your glory.

Since, then, you condescend to accept this great sacrifice by my hands, I unite my poor heart to the heart of Jesus Christ, and in his name I offer it to you, in acknowledgment of your supreme dominion. I would wish to see your infinite Majesty adored and loved by all men. May the honour which I give you this morning by offering to you the sacrifice of your Son, atone for all the dishonour and insults which men offer you by their sins.

I intend, at the same time, by this Mass to thank you for all the benefits conferred on the world, and particularly on me, a miserable sinner, who by my ingratitude deserve to be abandoned by you, I have multiplied sins, and you have multiplied your graces to me. I thank you, O infinite Goodness, or to speak more correctly, Jesus Christ thanks you for me.

Ah! Lord, through the merits of Jesus Christ enlighten me this morning; inflame me with your love, and detach me from the earth. Do not permit me to resist such tender proofs of affection. I love you, O sovereign Good, with my whole heart. I wish to give up all things in order to please you, O God, worthy of infinite love. Ah! increase continually my know-

ledge of the greatness of your goodness, that I may be always more enamoured of you, and that I may labour to please you in all things without reserve.

You have shown yourself enamoured of my soul, and can I love any thing but you? No, my Lord: henceforth I wish to live to you alone. I wish to love you alone, who merit all my love. O eternal Father, I hope in the blood of Jesus Christ that you will give effect to this my desire. You have bestowed so many favours on me when I fled from you; I ought, then to hope for much greater favours now that I seek after and desire nothing but your love. O my mother, Mary, who bore in your womb that God whom I am to receive this morning, assist me to receive him with humility and love.

FOURTH CONSIDERATION.

For Wednesday.

"Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris."—1 Joan., ii. 2. Consider how, by the sacrifice of the altar, the penalties due to sins are remitted, and immense mercies are obtained for poor sinners. Miserable should we be if we had not this great sacrifice by which the divine justice is prevented from inflicting the just vengeance which our sins deserve. Certainly all the victims of the Old Law could not appease the wrath of God against sinners. Nunquid placari potest Dominus in millibus arietum?"—Mich., vi. 7. Although the lives of all men, and of all the angels, were offered in sacrifice, they could not make sufficient satisfaction to the divine justice for a single sin committed by a creature against the Creator. Jesus Christ alone has been able to satisfy for our sins: "Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris." The eternal Father sent him on earth, that becoming mortal man, he might by the sacrifice of his life, appease the divine wrath against sinners. This sacrifice is renewed in every Mass that is celebrated.

Consider, then, O priest, your great office, which is to be a mediator between sinners and God, by offer-

ing to him on the altar the life and merits of Jesus Christ, by which the Lord is moved to grant sinners light and strength to repent, and afterwards to grant them the pardon of their sins. "Hujus quippe oblatione," says the Council of Trent, "placatus Dominus, gratiam et donum pœnitentiæ concedens, crimina et peccata etiam ingentia dimittit."—Sess. 22, cap. 2. Oh! how much better do the cries of the innocent blood of the Redeemer implore mercy for us, than the blood of Abel demanded vengeance against Cain? "Accessistis ad.....mediatorem Jesum, et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel." Heb. xii. 24:

AFFECTIONS.

O sovereign God, you are justly provoked against sinners; for they repay with ingratitude the great love which you have borne them. But if the sins of the world are great, the oblation and gift which I am going to present to you this morning are still greater: "Non sicut delictum, ita et donum."—Rom., v. 15. I offer to you this morning the sacrifice of your own Son. May this victim, so pleasing to you, appease your anger, and move you to show mercy to all poor sinners who either do not know you or do not wish to know you, and live deprived of your grace. Give them light and strength to leave the miserable state in which they blindly live.

I pray to you for all, but particularly for myself, who have received from you special favours, although I have been more ungrateful, and have offended and despised you more than others. O my God, for the love of Jesus Christ pardon all my sins, mortal and venial; all my impatience, lies, intemperance, distractions, and negligences in the Mass, the Office, and in meditation. Of all these I repent, because they have displeased you, who are infinite goodness, and merit infinite love from all, but particularly from me who am your priest.

I love you, O infinite Good, I love you above all things, and I promise to die rather than wilfully give

you the smallest displeasure. Ah; my Jesus, your death, and your blood are my hope. Through your merits I ask and hope for grace to be faithful to you, and to love you with my whole heart, and to love nothing but you. O most holy Mary, accompany and assist me now that I am going to offer to God this great sacrifice.

FIFTH CONSIDERATION.

For Thursday.

"In omnibus divites facti estis."—1 Cor., i. 5. Consider that by means of the holy Mass, God hears more readily the prayers of priests. God, at all times, when asked through the merits of Jesus Christ, dispenses his graces; but St. Chrysostom says, that during the Mass, he grants them more abundantly to the petitions of the priest: for his prayers, at that time, derive efficacy from, and are accompanied by, the prayers of Jesus Christ who is the principal priest in offering himself in this sacrifice, in order to obtain for us the divine graces.

According to the language of the Council of Trent, the time of Mass is precisely the time that the Lord sits on the throne of grace, to which the apostle exhorts us to go with confidence, in order to obtain the divine mercy and graces: "Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno."—Heb., iv. 16. St. Chrysostom says, that the angels wait for the time of Mass in order to intercede with greater efficacy in our behalf; and he adds, that what is not obtained during the Mass, is scarcely obtained at another time.—Hom. 3, de incompr. Dei.

Oh! what treasures of graces can a priest obtain for himself and others, by praying to God, with confidence, when he celebrates on the altar! The venerable Father Anthony of Colellis, used to say: "When I celebrate, and hold in my hand my Jesus Christ, I obtain from him whatever I wish."

In fine, St. Paul says, that in Jesus Christ we ob-

tain all riches, and every grace, if we ask them of the Father through his merits: "In omnibus divites facti estis in illo.....ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia." —1 Cor., v. 7. But this holds, particularly, when the priest is honouring God, and giving him delight, by offering to him in sacrifice, his own Son. And, since the Father, by means of the holy Mass, gives us, in the blessed sacrament, this same Son who is immolated to him, how can he ever, after having given us the Son, refuse any other grace: "Quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?"—Rom., viii. 32.

AFFECTIONS.

O miserable that I have been! How many graces, O my God, have I lost by neglecting to ask them in the Masses which I have celebrated! But since you give me light, I will be no longer negligent in this respect. I unite, then, O eternal Father, my prayers with the prayers of Jesus Christ, and for the love of this your Son, whom I am going, this morning, to offer to you in sacrifice, I entreat you, first, to grant me the pardon of all my sins, for which I am sorry with my whole heart. I ask you, also, to make known to me the infinite claims which you have to be loved, and my immense obligations to love you in return for the goodness and love you have shown me: give me strength to root out all earthly attachments, and to employ my heart only in loving you, O Sovereign Good, who have loved me so tenderly. I also pray you to give light to those who do not know you, and live in enmity with you. Give to all the gift of your grace. O infinite love of my God, make men know and love you.

And you, O my Saviour, make me all yours before I die; and do not permit me to be ever again separated from you. Alas! O my Jesus, as long as I live, I am in danger of losing you. I do not wish ever again to lose you. Beg of your Father to strike me dead rather than permit me again to turn my back upon you. Pray that I may always unite myself

more closely, by love to you, who have imposed on me so many obligations to love you. My Jesus, you are my love, and my hope. Grant that as often as I behold the altar, I may say what St. Philip Neri said when he beheld you in the most holy sacrament: "Behold my love! behold my love! behold all my love!" Most Holy Mary, do you also pray for me: obtain for me, by your intercession, the grace to be, what a priest ought to be, entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ.

SIXTH CONSIDERATION.

For Friday.

"Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum."—Mat., xxvi. 26. Consider that by means of the holy Mass, a priest who celebrates it with devotion, is sanctified in a special manner. For, in the Mass, he obtains an audience from the divine Majesty, and treats familiarly with the Incarnate Word: he then holds him in his hands, and speaks to him with confidence, familiarly, and as it were, face to face.

Besides, he is then permitted to receive from his own hands, the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood: for, to priests the Redeemer said in a special manner: "Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum." To seculars the communion is also given; but it is not lawful for them to take the holy sacrament, and to communicate whenever they wish: they must receive the communion from the hands of the priest, and when the priest is pleased to administer it to them; but the priest may receive Jesus Christ when he pleases.

In a word, the priest holds the keys of all the divine treasures, to avail himself of them as he pleases: for, as St. Chrysostom says, the most holy sacrament contains all the treasures of the goodness of God: "Dicendo Eucharistiam, omnem benignitatis Dei thesaurum aperio." Thus, in the celebrating Mass, the priest appears to be, in a certain manner, the master

of Jesus in the holy sacrament: "De toto Deo dives est."

Jesus Christ belongs entirely to priests; but how many priests belong entirely to Jesus Christ? Oh! God, how does the greater number of them love this their Saviour, who has loved them so tenderly, and has raised them to so great a height? Oh! God, how many peasants, how many poor females love Jesus Christ more than so many priests! Alas! how great shall be the pain of a damned priest in hell, when he shall find himself for ever at a distance from Jesus Christ; for ever deprived of him who had been so near to him in this world, and had been entirely his!

AFFECTIONS.

Ah! my dear Jesus, you have made yourself a victim on the cross, in order to be offered in sacrifice by me on the altar, and to nourish me with your divine blood. In a word, in making me your priest, you have made yourself entirely mine—you have given yourself entirely to me, so that I can take you into my hands whenever I wish, and can eat your sacred flesh whenever I please.

My dear Redeemer, increase my faith, make me understand who you are when I hold you in my hands, in the holy sacrament—when you remain near me on the altar—when I place your body in my mouth, and approach my lips to your blood. Why do I not burn with love, in thinking that you are my God, and that you condescend to be treated by me with such familiarity, and to become my meat and my drink?

You have not been satisfied with giving all your blood, and your life on the cross for the love of me: you wish me to drink this same blood in order to be entirely united to you, and to become one thing with you. "Ipsa re nos suum efficit corpus."—S. Chrysos.

Ah! my God, enlighten me, and assist me not to live any longer ungrateful to your love. Detach me from the earth. Grant that I may place no more

obstacles to the abundance of the graces which you dispense to them who receive you with love in the holy communion. I love you, my Jesus, who have died for me, and have become my food. Eternal Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, whom I offer you this morning, grant me all the graces which are necessary to make me entirely yours. O most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

SEVENTH CONSIDERATION.

For Saturday.

"Festinans descende, quia hodie in domo tua oportet me manere."—Luc., xix. 5. Imagine that Jesus addresses to you, this morning, these words, which he once addressed to Zaccheus: hasten, come to the altar, I wish to enter, this day, into the house of your soul in order to preserve its life, to heal its wounds, and to inflame it with my love. Yes, all this the divine sacrament effects. It is bread which gives life to the soul: "Panis, quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundi vita."—Jo., vi. 52. It is a remedy by which we are delivered and preserved from our sins: "Antidotum quo liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur."—Trident. Sess. 13, c. 2. It is a fire which inflames the soul with holy love; so that, as St. Chrysostom says, unless we ourselves place an obstacle to the effect of the sacrament, we shall depart from the altar "*flammam spirantes, terribiles effecti diabolo.*"

But, my God, how does it happen that so many priests who eat this divine bread every morning, instead of burning with divine love, become always more attached to the world, and always go to the altar with even the same deliberate venial sins? All this happens because they celebrate without an intention or desire of their own sanctification, and through interest or custom. Hence they always fall into the same defects, and thus they approach death and go to render to Jesus Christ an account

of the tepid and irregular life they have led in the priesthood.

Dearly beloved priest, if you belong to this class, remember that this celestial bread will not contribute to your sanctification, but will render you more guilty before God. Amend; consider that death approaches. Reflect on the attachments and defects which hinder you to advance in the divine love, and remove them. Remember that you are a priest; that God has chosen you for his favourite, and could not magnify you more than he has done.

AFFECTIONS.

O God of infinite majesty, you wish to come, this morning, to dwell in my soul: the houses in which you dwell should be holy: "Domum tuam decet sanctitudo, Domine." Ps., xcii. 5. How can I, who am so imperfect and full of defects, dare to receive you? "Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum."

Ah! my Redeemer, were I now to appear before you in judgment, what account would I give of so many Masses which I have said, and of so many years that I have been a priest? Lord, wait for me, and do not judge me yet: "Non intres in judicio cum servo tuo."—cxlii 2. For the sake of your mercy, wait for me a little longer: "Dimitte ergo me ut plangam paululum dolorem meum, antequam vadam et non revertar."—Job., x. 20. Permit me to live a little longer, that I may bewail the ingratitude with which I have hitherto treated you, O my Jesus. You have made me a priest; but in what respect have I, a miserable sinner, hitherto lived as a priest ought to live. After so many Masses and communions, I ought to be all on fire with your love, all pure, and holy. On your part nothing has been wanting: on my part I have been culpable on account of the obstacles I have placed to your grace. My life has not honoured you; no, it has dishonoured you before heaven and earth. You have taken me from the world, and I have loved it more than worldlings themselves. My

God, mercy: do not abandon me, I wish to amend. I am sorry, with my whole heart, for all the displeasure I have given you. I wish to begin to love you with a true love: I wish to begin this morning, on which I am to receive you again.

I love you, O God of my soul; I love you, my Saviour, who have given your life in order to save me, and make me your priest: "Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea." Pardon me, O my Jesus, and heal me. Detach me from the world, and bind me fast to yourself: make me live as a priest ought to live. My dear Redeemer, your merits are my hope. Eternal Father, I offer you, this morning, Jesus Christ, that you may make me all yours. Most holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me.

AFFECTIONS FOR THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS.

FIRST THANKSGIVING.

For Sunday.

My dear Jesus, my Redeemer, and my God, before Mass I have adored you in heaven, contemplating you on a throne of glory, at the right hand of your eternal Father; I now adore you within my breast, concealed under the humble appearance of bread and wine, and thus become the food and drink of my soul.

Welcome, O Lord, to my soul. I thank you with my whole heart, I would wish to thank you as you deserve to be thanked; but what other thanksgiving could a poor peasant make to his sovereign for having come to visit him in his cabin, than to cast himself at his feet, and thus to remain prostrate in silence, to admire and praise such an excess of goodness? I, therefore, O my divine King, O my Jesus, cast myself at your feet, and I adore you from the abyss of my miseries. I unite my adoration with the adoration of most holy Mary, when she received you in her

sacred womb. I would wish, also, to love you as she loved you.

Ah! my Redeemer, you have, this morning, in obedience to my words, descended from heaven into my hands; and how often have I, by disobedience to your commands, ungratefully turned my back upon you, and renounced your grace and love! My dear Jesus, I hope that you have already pardoned me; for I repent with my whole heart of having offended you, who are infinite goodness.

O my Jesus, that I had always loved you! I ought, at least, since I offered my first Mass, to burn with your love. Among so many millions of men, you have chosen me for your priest and favourite: what more could you do to make me love you? But I thank you, O my love, for giving me time to do what I have not done. I wish to love you with my whole heart. I do not wish that in my heart there be any other affection than for you, who have bound me by so many obligations to love you.

"Deus meus et omnia." My God how contemptible are the riches, the honours, and pleasures of the world? You are my all—you shall, henceforth, be my only good, my only love. I will say, with St. Paulinus: "Sibi habeant divitias suas divites, regna sua reges: mihi Christus gloria et regnum." Let the kings and the rich of this world enjoy their kingdoms and their riches: you, alone, O my Jesus, shall be my riches and my kingdom.

Eternal Father, for the love of this Son whom I have offered to you in sacrifice, and received into my breast, give me holy perseverance in your grace, and the gift of your holy love. I also recommend to you, all my relatives, friends and enemies. I recommend to you the souls in purgatory, and all poor sinners. [*This Prayer should be repeated every morning after Mass.*] Most holy Mary, my Mother, obtain for me holy perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ.

Every priest will do well to repeat the following prayers every morning. I find it written, that many indulgences have been granted for the recitation of them.

"Anima Christi sanctissima sanctifica me: Corpus Christi sacratissimum, costodi me. Sanguis Christi pretiosissime, inebria me. Aqua lateris Christi purissima, lava me. Passio Christi amarissima, conforta me. O bone Jesu, exaudi me. Intra vulnera tua absconde me. Ne permittas me separari a te." [*It will be useful to repeat this verse three times with fervour.*] "Ab hoste maligno defende me. In hora mortis voca me; et jube venire ad te, ut cum sanctis et angelis tuis collaudem te per infinita sæcula sæculorum." Amen.

SECOND THANKSGIVING.

For Monday.

O infinite goodness! O infinite love! A God has given himself entirely to me, and has made himself entirely mine! My soul, unite all your affections, and embrace your Lord who has come on purpose to unite himself to you, and to be loved by you.

My dear Redeemer, I embrace you: my treasure and my life, to you I unite myself: do not reject me. Unhappy me—who have hitherto banished you from my soul, and have been separated from you. I wish, for the future, to lose life a thousand times, rather than lose you, my sovereign good. Forget, O Lord, the offences I have committed against you, and pardon me. I am sorry for them with my whole soul; I would wish to die of sorrow for them.

But, after all the offences I have offered to you, I feel that you still command me to love you: "Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo." Ah! my Lord, who am I that you so ardently desire to be loved by me? But since you wish for my love, I desire to gratify your wishes. You have died for me, you have given me your flesh for my food: I renounce all things, I take leave of all things, and I embrace you, my beloved Saviour: "Quis me separabit a charitate Christi?"

My dear Redeemer, whom will I love if I love not you who are infinite beauty, infinite goodness, and

worthy of infinite love? "Quid mihi est in cœlo, et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in æternum." Yes, my Lord, where can I find, in heaven or on earth, a greater good than you? Where can I find one who has loved me more than you have loved me? "Adveniat regnum tuum." Ah! my Jesus, take possession, this morning, of my whole heart; I give it entirely to you; possess it always; possess it without reserve, and banish from it all love which is not for you. I choose you alone for my portion, and my riches: "Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum." Grant that I may always pray to you with St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis." Give me your love and your grace, that is, grant that I may love you, and be loved by you, and I am sufficiently rich; I neither desire nor ask any thing more.

But you know my weakness, you know all my treasons against you; assist me by your grace, and do not permit me to be ever again separated from your love: "Ne permittas me separari a te." I say this prayer now, and I wish to say it always—give me grace to repeat it always: "Ne permittas me separari a te." Most holy Mary, my hope, obtain for me, from God, these two graces, holy perseverance, and holy love, and I ask nothing more.

THIRD THANKSGIVING.

For Tuesday.

Ah! my Lord, how I have been able to offend you so often by sin, when I knew that I thereby gave you great displeasure? Ah! through the merits of your passion, pardon me, and unite my whole soul to you by your love; let not the filth of my sins remove you to a distance from me. Ah! give me always a more perfect knowledge of the great good which is found in you, of the love which you deserve, and the affection you have borne me.

I desire, O my Jesus, to sacrifice my whole being

to you, who have sacrificed yourself entirely for me. By so many marks of love you have bound me to yourself: do not permit me to be ever separated from you. I love you, O my God, and I wish always to love you. And how shall I be able, now that I have known your love, to live any longer at a distance from you, and deprived of your grace?

I thank you for having borne me when I was your enemy, and for now giving me time to love you. Had I died then, I could never more love you. But since I am able to love you, I wish to love you, O my Jesus, to the utmost of my power; and I wish to do all that I can to please you. I love you, O infinite goodness, I love you more than myself; and because I love you, I give you my body, my soul, and my entire will. Do with me, and dispose of me, as you please; I embrace all your arrangements. It is enough for me that you grant me the grace to love you always, I ask nothing else. Give the goods of this earth to him who wishes for them. I desire, and ask nothing from you but perseverance in your grace, and the gift of your holy love.

O Eternal Father, trusting in the promise of your Son: "Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—Jo. xvi. 23. I ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, holy perseverance, and the grace to love you with my whole heart, and henceforth to fulfil, in all things, your holy will. O my Jesus, you have sacrificed yourself entirely for me, and have given yourself entirely to me, that I might give my whole being to you; and that I might sacrifice to you my whole will. For I hear you saying: "Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum."—Prov., xxiii. 26. Behold, O Lord, my heart, my will: I give it and sacrifice it entirely to you. But you know my weakness; assist me, and do not permit me to take this will of mine from you again in order to offend you. No; do not permit it: grant that I may always love you; grant that I may love you as much as a priest ought to love you; and as your Son, expiring on the cross, was able to say, "Consummatum est," grant that I also may be able to say at death, that from

this day forward I have done all your holy wills. Grant that in all temptations and dangers of offending you, I may never cease to have recourse to you; and to implore your assistance through the merits of Jesus Christ. O most holy Mary, obtain for me the grace that in my temptations I may recommend myself always to God, and to you, who are all-powerful with God.

FOURTH THANKSGIVING.

For Wednesday.

Ah! my Jesus, I see all you have done and suffered, in order to put me under the necessity of loving you; and that I have been so ungrateful to you. O God of my soul! how often have I exchanged your grace, and treated you with contempt, for the sake of a miserable pleasure or caprice? I have been sufficiently grateful towards creatures; to you alone have I been ungrateful. My dear God, pardon me: I am sorry with my whole heart for my ingratitude, and I hope for pardon from you, because you are infinite goodness. Were you not infinite goodness, I would lose the hope of forgiveness, and would not even dare to ask your mercy.

I thank you, O my love, for not having sent me to hell, which I have deserved; and for having borne with me so long. Ah! my God, the patience which you had with me, ought to enamour me of you. And who but you, who are a God of infinite mercy, would have borne with me? I see that you have sought after me so long that I might love you: I do not wish to resist your love any longer: behold, I give myself entirely to you. I have offended you sufficiently, I now wish to love you. I love you, O my sovereign good! I love you, O infinite goodness! I love you my God, worthy of infinite love; and I wish to repeat always in time and in eternity, I love you! I love you! I love you!

O God, how many years have I lost, in which I could love you, and make greater progress in your

love; but I have spent them in offending you. I hope that I shall never more cease to love you. I know not how long I am to live; but whether they shall be few or many, I consecrate all the remaining years of my life to you. You have waited for me till now, that I might love you. Yes, my beloved Lord, I wish to please you, I wish always to love you, and to love you alone. What pleasures?—what riches?—what honours? You alone, my God, you alone are and shall always be my love—my all.

But I can do nothing if you do not assist me with your grace. Ah! wound my heart—inflame my whole soul with your holy love, and bind it to you; but bind it so fast that it can never more be separated from you. You have promised to love them that love you: "Ego diligentes me diligo."—Prov., viii. 17. I now love you; pardon my boldness. Do you also love me, and do not permit me to do any thing which might oblige you to cease to love me. "Qui non diligit manet in morte."—1 Joan., iii. 14. Save me from the death of not being able to love you. Make me always love you, that you may be able always to love me, and that thus our mutual love may be eternal, and may never be dissolved. O eternal Father, grant me this grace for the sake of Jesus Christ. Grant it to me, my Jesus, through your merits: in these I trust that I shall always love you, and that you will always love me. Mary, mother of God, and my mother, pray to Jesus for me.

FIFTH THANKSGIVING.

For Thursday.

O God of infinite Majesty, behold at your feet a traitor who has so grievously offended you. You have so often pardoned me, and after all the lights and graces which you have given me, I have again offended you. Others have sinned in the midst of darkness, I have sinned in the midst of light. But listen to your Son, whom I have offered to you in sacrifice this morning, and who is now within my

breast. He asks mercy and pardon for me. Pardon me for the sake of Jesus Christ. I repent with my whole heart of having offended you who are infinite goodness.

I know that you delight in showing mercy to sinners for the sake of Jesus Christ. "Complacuit..... per eum reconciliare omnia in ipsum."—Col., i. 20. For the love of Jesus Christ, then, have mercy on me. "Ne projicias me a facie tua." Cast me not away from your face as I have deserved; pardon me, and change my heart. "Cor mundum crea in me Deus." Grant this favour, at least for the sake of your own honour, since you have made me your priest, your minister, and have destined me to offer to you in sacrifice your own very Son. Make me live as a priest ought to live. Ah! consume with the flames of your love and destroy in me all earthly affections. Grant that from this day forward I may be grateful for the great graces you have bestowed upon me, and for the tender love you have borne me. If I have hitherto despised your friendship, I now esteem it more than all the kingdoms of the world, and I prefer your pleasure before all the riches and pleasures of heaven and earth.

O my Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, detach me from all things. You wish that your priests be entirely separated from the world, to live only to you and to the works of your glory: "Segregate mihi Saulum et Barnabam in opus ad quod assumpsi eos."—Act., xiii. 2. I know that you wish the same from me. I purpose to do it: but assist me with your grace. Draw me entirely to yourself. Give me patience and resignation in troubles and crosses. Give me fervour to practise mortification for your sake. Give me the spirit of true humility, so that I may rejoice at seeing myself esteemed contemptible and full of defects. "Doce me facere voluntatem tuam." Teach me to do your will, and then tell me what you wish from me, and I will do it. Accept, O my God, for your lover a sinner who has heretofore offended you, but now wishes to love you with a true love, and to be yours without reserve. O eternal God, I hope

to love you for eternity; and therefore I wish to love you ardently in this life in order to love you ardently in eternity.

SIXTH THANKSGIVING.

For Friday.

My Jesus, how have you been able to select for your priest, from among so many men, one who has so often turned his back upon you, and despised your grace. My beloved Lord, I repent my whole soul. Tell me, have you pardoned me? I hope that you have. You have been my Redeemer, not only once, but as often as you have pardoned me. Ah! my Saviour, that I had never offended you. Ah! make me feel that you say to me what you said to Magdalene: "Remittuntur tibi peccata tua." Make me feel by giving me a great sorrow for my sins, that you have already restored me to your grace and friendship.

"In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine Domine Deus veritatis." Ah! my divine Pastor, you have come down from heaven to seek after me, a lost sheep; and you descend on the altar every day for my welfare. You have given your life in order to save me: do not abandon me.

You have shed all your blood for me: "Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famulis subveni quos pretioso sanguine redemisti." You are now my advocate; you are not as yet my judge. Obtain pardon for me from your Father; obtain for me light and strength to love you with my whole soul. Give me grace to live during the remaining days of my life in such a manner, that when I shall see you as my judge, I may see you appeased with me.

Ah! reign by your love in my whole heart. Grant that I may be all yours, and, therefore, my Saviour, remind me always of the love which you have borne me, and of all you have done in order to save me, and to be loved by me. You have made me a priest that I might think of loving nothing but you.

Yes, my Jesus, I wish to please you. I love you, and I wish to love nothing but you. Give me humility; patience in the tribulations of this life; meekness under insults; mortification by abstaining from earthly pleasures; and detachment from creatures; and grant that I may banish from my heart every affection which tends not to you. I ask and hope for all through the merits of your passion; my dear Jesus, my beloved Jesus, O my good Jesus hear me. *O bone Jesu exaudi me.* O Mary, my hope, do you too hear me, and pray to Jesus for me.

SEVENTH THANKSGIVING.

For Saturday.

"Loquere Domine qui audit servus tuus."—1 Reg., iii. 9. My dear Jesus, you have come again this morning to visit my soul. I thank you with my whole heart. Since you have come, speak Lord; tell me what you wish from me, and I will do it all. I have deserved that you should speak to me no more, because I have been so often deaf to your words by which you called me to your love, and have so often ungratefully turned my back upon you. But I have already repented of the offences I have given you; I now repent of them again, and I hope that you have already pardoned me. Tell me what you wish from me; I wish to do whatsoever you will.

Oh! that I had always loved you, O my God. Unhappy me, how many years have I lost? But your blood and your promises make me hope that by seeking only your love and pleasure, I will compensate for the future, the time I have lost.

I love you, O my Redeemer; I love you, O my God, and I sigh only to love you with my whole heart, and even to die for the love of you, who have died for the love of me. "Amore amoris tui," I will say with St. Francis, "moriar qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori." You, my Jesus, have given yourself entirely to me; you have given me all your blood, your life, all your toils, all your merits. You have

nothing more to give me. I give myself entirely to you; I give you all my gratifications, all the pleasures of this earth; my body, my soul, and my will. I have nothing more to give; if I had I would give it to you. My dear Jesus, you are sufficient for me.

But, O Lord, grant that I may be faithful to you. Do not permit me to change my will, and to forsake you. I hope in your passion, O my Saviour, that this shall never happen. You have said, "Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est."—Eccl., ii. 11. Then I, too, can say with confidence, "In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum." I hope, and will always hope, O God of my soul, that I shall never have to suffer the confusion of seeing myself in enmity with you. "In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum."

My God, you are omnipotent, sanctify me. Grant that I may love you ardently; that I may omit nothing which I know to be for your glory, and that I may conquer all difficulties in order to please you. Happy me if I lose all things in order to gain you and your love. For this end you have given me life; grant that I may spend it all for you. I deserve not favours but chastisements, and I say to you: chastise me as you wish, but do not deprive me of your love. You have loved me without reserve: I wish to love you without reserve, O infinite Good, infinite Love. O will of God, you are my love. O my Jesus, you have died for me. Oh! that I also could die for you, and by my death make all love you. O infinite Good, infinitely amiable, I esteem and love you above every good. O Mary, draw me entirely to God. Give me confidence in you; obtain for me the grace to have recourse always to you. You have to sanctify me by your intercession. Such my hope.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE.

Taken from manuscripts of St. Francis de Sales, By St. Alphonsus M. Liguori.

Oh! excess of love, consecrated Host! I adore you within me; one heart is too little to love you, O my Jesus; one tongue is too little to praise your goodness. O my Saviour, how great are my obligations to you for having visited so poor a creature. I offer myself entirely to you, in acknowledgement of so great a favour.

No: I do not wish to live any longer in myself. I wish that Jesus alone may live in me. He is mine, and I am his for all eternity. O love, love! no more sins. I will never forget the goodness and the mercies of Jesus, my Saviour and my guest. Yes, my God, I believe firmly that you are in soul and body within my breast: your divinity is at present within me, and united to me.

O my God, you come in order to unite yourself to me, to apply abundantly to my soul the merits of your passion, and to sanctify me. Do, then, in me all that for which you come. Ah! my God, all-wise, all-powerful, do not lose the fruit of your journey; unite yourself to me, and me to you, by an inseparable union; and by perfect love.

My Saviour, through that infinite goodness which has made you descend on earth, I entreat you to make me feel the effect of your love in consuming my soul, so that despising all earthly goods, I may seek only after you, that I may think only of you. Thus may the same love which has made you die on the cross, make me likewise die in you, in order to live in you for eternity.

O God of my soul, who deserve to be loved above all creatures, I protest that I regard you as the only object of my affection, and that I prefer you to all the goods of the world, and to myself. I wish to be faithful to you, and I wish never more to see myself separated from you.

I resign and abandon myself entirely to you,

embracing with all love and respect, all your holy wills, and your just designs regarding me. And I pray you that whatsoever you have ordained in my regard, for time and for eternity, may be accomplished. But I hope to see one day your divine countenance, and your infinite beauty. My God draw me to yourself, that I may love you, and may burn with your love, in which I would wish to be consumed.

O Eternal Father, for the love of your Son fill my memory with holy thoughts, which will always make me remember you and your Son. Ah! make me know and do all that you desire from me. And you, O Holy Spirit, fill my will with holy affections, which will produce the fruits that proceed from your love. Enlighten me with your light, that I may walk in the straight road to you, and that my will may have liberty only to be entirely yours.

O Incarnate Word, grant that I may love you, and love nothing but you. Remove from me all occasions which turn me away from your love. Grant that my heart may be wholly occupied in seeking and serving you as the principal love of hearts. You have come into the world for the sole purpose of dwelling in the hearts you have redeemed with your blood; may my heart, then, be all yours; take possession of it. Look to all my wants; enlighten me, and make me willing to do all your wills.

O omnipotent Jesus, take away from me all obstacles to the effects of your power and benevolence. I renounce my liberty and consecrate it entirely to the arrangements of your holy will. Have mercy on me, and cleanse me from all my stains and infidelities; fill me with your grace and wisdom. I abandon myself entirely to you, O my Jesus; I wish to be all yours. I wish to labour fervently for your glory, and to suffer with patience all tribulations at the sight of your sufferings. Grant that I may be employed only in what pleases you.

My God, though there were no punishment for sinners, I would not cease to love you and to suffer for you. Grant that I may correspond to your desires. You shall henceforth be my portion for

ever. O Incarnate Word, wash my heart in your blood, and imprint on it, as the mark of your love, your holy name Jesus.

O my Jesus, through the eternal love you have borne me, grant that I may love you during the short time that I have to live on this earth, in order to be able afterwards to love you for eternity in heaven. O God of love, grant that I may live only for you. When shall I be all yours as you are all mine? When shall I die to myself to live entirely to your love? I do not even know how to give myself to you as I ought. Ah! my God, take me and make me all yours.

O Blessed Virgin, I rejoice with you at your having won the heart of your God. Ah! unite me entirely to your Son; speak to him in my behalf, and beg of him to give me the grace to do whatsoever he will inspire me to do. Teach me to practise the virtues which you practised on earth, and detach my affections from every thing which is not God, that I may love him with all my strength.

My God, inflame my whole heart with your love, that I may seek nothing but your pleasure; that nothing may please me but what pleases you, and that I banish from my soul everything which is not agreeable to you. Grant that I may always say with sincerity, my God, my God, I wish for you alone, and for nothing else. My Jesus, give me a great devotion to your most holy passion, that your pains and your death may be always before my eyes to inflame me always with love for you, and to incline me always to make some return of gratitude for so much love. Give me also a great devotion to the most holy sacrament of the altar, in which you have displayed the tenderness of your love for me. I also pray you to give me a tender devotion to your most holy Mother; give me the grace always to love her, and to serve her by always invoking her intercession, and by inducing others to practise devotion to her, and to have confidence in her patronage; and to me and to all, grant always a great confidence, first in the merits of your passion, and afterwards in the intercession of Mary.

I pray you to grant me a holy death. Give me the grace to receive you in my last illness in the most holy viaticum, that united with you, burning with holy flames, and with an ardent desire of seeing you, I may depart from this world to embrace your feet the first time I shall behold you.

O my King, come and reign alone in my soul; take full possession of it that it may serve and obey only your love.

O my Jesus, that I could consume my entire being for you, who have consumed your whole life for me.

O Lamb of God, immolated on the cross, remember that I am one of the souls that you have redeemed by so many toils and so many sorrows. Grant that I may never lose you. You have given yourself entirely to me: grant that I may be all yours, and that I may have no other desire than that of pleasing you. I love you, O infinite Good, I love you in order to please you. I love you because you deserve my love. My greatest sorrow arises from seeing that I have lived so long in the world and have not loved you.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of the sorrow which you had for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, that I had died rather than have ever offended you.

O love of my Jesus, you are my love and my hope. I wish to lose life a thousand times rather than lose your grace.

My God, had I died when I was in sin, I could never more love you. I thank you for giving me time, and for calling me to love you. Now that I am able I wish to love you with my whole soul. It was that I might love you, that you bore with me so long. Yes, I wish to love you. Ah! for the sake of the blood which you have shed for me, do not permit me to betray you again. "In te Domine, speravi non confundar in æternum." What world? what riches? what amusements? what honours? God, God, I wish for God alone. My God, you alone who are an infinite good, are sufficient for me.

O my Jesus, bind me entirely to your love, and

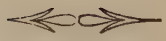
draw to yourself all my affections, that I may be able to love nothing but you. Make me all yours before I die.

Ah! my God, while I live I am in danger of losing you. Ah! when shall the day arrive on which I can say, my Jesus I can never more lose you?

O eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, do not reject me; accept me to love you, and give me your holy love. I wish to love you tenderly in this life in order to love you ardently in the next.

O infinite Good, I love you; make me understand the great good which I love, and give me that love which you deserve from me. Grant that I may conquer all things in order to please you.

O Mary, who so ardently desire to see your Son loved, the grace which I ask you to obtain for me is, that I may love him during all the remaining days of my life. I desire nothing more. O my Lady and my Mother, in you I trust. You obtain whatsoever you ask from your God; you pray for all your clients, pray also for me.



DE OBLIGATIONIBUS PASTORUM ANIMARUM, ID EST PAROCHORUM ET EPISCOPORUM.

AUCTORE SANCTO ALPHONSO M. LIGOURI.

DE PAROCHORUM OBLIGATIONIBUS.

I. *De* residentia. *Dispositiones Concilii* 1. *Si residet inutiliter* 2. *Bona fides non excusat a restitutione* 3. *De licentia requirenda ab Episcopo* 4. *Ubi residendum sit Papæ, Cardinalibus, Episcopis, et parochis* 5. *Excusant charitas, necessitas, obedientia, et utilitas* 6. *An sufficiat licentia oretenus, an tacita, an præsumpta* 7. *Si addatur causa pro absentia, sed desit licentia* 8. *An omnes fructus restituendi sint* 9. *Et cui* 10. II. *De* Sacramentorum administratione 11, *ad* 14. *An tempore pestis, etc.* 15. III. *De* celebratione Missæ 16. IV. *De* correctione 17. *ad* 19. *Debet impedire quominus clericalem habitum suscipiant, et denegare fidem indignis* 20. *Debet inquirere, etc. et præcipue schedulas Communionis, matrimonii impedimenta* 21. V. *De* concione, *et* doctrina christiana 22. *et* 23. *Quæ gravioris momenti, ut annuntientur* 24, *ad* 31, *Aliæ obligationes parochi, nempe* 1. *Exemplum* 2, *assistere moribundis* 3, *eleemosyna* 4, *examinare obstetrices, etc. circa Baptismum* 32 *et* 33. *De pulsanda campana hora* 3. *post meridiem, etc.* 32. *v.* Notand.

DE EPISCOPI MUNERIBUS.

I. De Ordinatione 34. *Ordinandi debent probari in spiritu* 35. *ad* 38. *Et in doctrina* 39. *De seminario ad id instituto* 40. II. *De* parochorum *delectu* 41. *Quæ istis Episcopus insinuare debet. Hic sermo fit de puellarum congregatione* 42. *De confessairorum electione, sermo fit de academiis* 43. *De congregationibus particularibue ecclesiasticorum* 44. *Debet invigilare super Missarum celebratione* 45. III. *De* visitatione

46. *et* 47. IV. *De* cura Monialium 48. V. *De* residentia 49. VI. *De* correctione 50. VII. *De* eleëmosyna 51. *De Missa, de aditu patefiendo ad se concurrentibus, et de exemplo præcipue circa mansuetudinem, paupertatem, orationem, etc.* 52. *et* 53.

1.—Parochi multis oneribus devinciuntur, sed quinque præcipue: I. Tenentur ad residentiam. II. Ad Sacramentorum administrationem. III. Ad celebrandam Missam pro populo. IV. Ad corrigendum. V. Ad prædicandum, et instruendum. De omnibus sigillatim. Et 1. quoad residentiam ante omnia advertendum quod fuit declaratum, et dispositum a Tridentino *Sess.* 23. *et reform. c.* 1. super hoc. Itaque Concilium 1. sufficienter declarat (ut communi DD. sententia intellectum est) omnes Episcopos, et præsertim cæteros omnes curatos teneri de jure divino ad residendum in loco, ubi cura exercenda est, dum ibi pastores dicuntur de jure divino teneri pascere oves non solum Sacramentis, et verbi divini prædicatione, sed etiam exemplo, cui non potest satisfieri, nisi per residentiam, qua præsentes se ostendunt. 2. Statuit quoad Episcopos (quod procedit etiam de parochis) ne a diœcesi discedant, nisi una ex sequentibus causis ita postulet, nempe charitas christiana, vel necessitas urgens, vel debita obedientia, vel evidens Ecclesiæ, aut reipublicæ utilitas, approbanda tamen a Papa, vel a metropolitano, etc. (Benedictus XIV. tamen eam approbationem in Bulla *Grave* soli Papæ reservat,) providendo tamen, quantum fieri poterit, ne sua absentia oves aliquid patiantur detrimenti. Conceduntur cæteroquin Episcopis tres menses, quibus possunt abesse, sed ex æqua causa, et sine gregis detrimento, de quo eorum conscientiæ onerantur: hortantur tamen residere in suis cathedralibus temporibus adventus, quadragesimæ, Nativitatis Domini, Paschæ, et Pentecostes. Quoad parochos dicitur, quod ipsi nequeunt ecclesias derelinquere ultra menses duos, modo non adsit gravis causa procul morandi, sed tunc non nisi ex licentia *in scriptis* ab Episcopo obtinenda. Imo etiam illis duobus mensibus non possunt parochi discedere, nisi Episcopus approbaverit causam, et

idoneitatem vicarii, quem semper tenetur substituere parochus cum discedit. 3. Declarat, et statuit omnes pastores non residentes præter peccati mortalis reatum, pro rata absentiæ non facere fructus suos ex cura provenientes, et teneri, *alia etiam declaratione non secuta*, ad illos restituendos vel fabricæ ecclesiæ, vel loci pauperibus, quacumque compositione remota.

2.—Hoc supposito, dicimus I. cum *cum P. Viva* eamdem culpam, et restitutionis obligationem incurri a pastoribus absentibus, ac ab in utiliter in ecclesiis residentibus ; et hoc tum ex lege naturali : fructus enim dantur pastoribus ratione utilis residentiæ, non autem personalis tantum ; tum quia Concilium expresse eos obstringit ad talem utilem residentiam dum dixit, *ubi injuncto sibi officio defungi teneantur ;* et novissime luculenter hoc declaravit laudatus Pontifex Benedic. XIV. in præfata Bulla *Grave* dicens, residentiam non esse veram, nisi sit formalis, nempe cum debito officio satisfit. Et notant *Barbosa*, et *Salmant*, cum *Vasq.* et *Garzia* afferentes declarationem S. C. non reputari residere illum parochum, qui duos menses per se non exercet munera principaliora, nempe concionem, et Sacramentorum administrationem.—Lib. 4. n. 127. Dubit. 3.

3.—Dicimus II. parochum (aut Episcopum) non residendo, quamvis bona fide credat habere justam causam, etiam teneri ad restitutionem (quidquid dicant *Viva* et *Garzia*) ; et eadem ratione superius assignata, dum pastor tenetur residere, non solum lege positiva, sed etiam naturali, ratione contractus inter pastorem, et Ecclesiam initi, propter quem illi dantur fructus ; unde non potest hoc sibi retinere, semper ac (licet sine mala fide) muneris sui partes non adimplet. Tanto magis quod Benedict. XIV. in Bulla *Ad universæ* 3. Sept. an. 1746. *(In Bull. edit. Mechl. t.* 4. *p.* 273.) declaravit expresse Episcopos absentes ultra tres menses ab ecclesiis sine legitima causa, et expressa licentia Papæ, transgressorum pœnas incurrere, inter quas, uti dictum est, præcipua est pœna, ut non faciant fructus suos.—Ibid. Dubit. 2.

4.—Dicimus III. licet a Concilio requiratur licen-

tia Episcopi tantum pro absentia parochi ultra duos menses, nihilominus parochum non posse derelinquere parochiam, neque per illos duos menses, tametsi justam habeat causam, nisi Episcopus eam approbet, et nisi etiam (quod magis interest) approbet substitutum sufficiendum.—N. 123. Dubit. 2. Cæterum si unquam accideret aliqua necessitas discedendi, quæ moram non pateretur, tunc bene permittitur parocho discedere, modo sit pro brevi tempore, et vicarium idoneum pro se substituat. Ita DD. communiter cum Decr. S. C. Debet tamen tunc parochus certiorem facere saltem Episcopum de hac sua absentia, ut saltem licentiam obtineat pro alio tempore, quo abesse deberet, modo brevi reversurus non esset. Præterea hujusmodi absentia admittit materiæ parvitatem, ut communiter dicunt *Castropal. Anacl. Roncag. Barb. Holzman*, etc. Alii dicunt esse parvitatem materiæ moram unius hebdomadæ, multi alii etiam duarum, ut *Tournel. Cabassut. Sanchez. Ronc.* etc. (semper intelligitur, si substituat alium.) Sed in Concilio romano sub Benedicto XIII. (*tit.* 25. *c.* 6.) prohibitum fuit parochis abesse a cura sua ultra biduum sine licentia Episcopi, aut ipsius vicarii; rumor tamen communis est etiam a doctis viris divulgatus, quad talis Synodus non fuisset in nostro regno acceptata. *La-Croix* excusat a culpa gravi parochum, qui abesset duos menses sine licentia, sed cum causa, et sine gravi damno gregis, dicens quod talis absentia non reputatur a Concilio gravis, et pro se citat *Barbosam, Nav. Bonac.* et alios. Sed huic opinioni nescio acquiescere, dum Concilium (ut dictum est) statuit ut Episcopus in tali absentia non solum approbet causam, sed etiam vicarii idoneitatem ob periculum quod contingere potest, quod non idoneus substitutus possit magno damno esse gregi duos menses ei præsidendo.—Lib. 4. n. 123. v. Cæterum.

5.—Quæritur 1, Ubi debent residere pastores? Papa et Cardinales Romæ. Episcopo, ut dicunt *Fagn. Salm.*, etc. residendum in cathedrali: nos vero cum *Cabass. Bonoc. Holzman*, quod possit residere in quolibet loco diœcesis et hoc non dotest hodie revocari in dubium post Bullam Benedicti XIV. quæ incipit *Ubi*

primum anno 1740 in qua sic declaratum est: *Personalem in ecclesia vestra, vel diœcesi servetis residentiam.* Confirmando cæteroquin quod prius expresserat Trident. his verbis: *Obligari ad personalem in sua ecclesia, vel diœcesi residentiam.* Parochus autem debet manere domi ecclesiæ suæ, si adest; sin minus, in alia domo in restrictu parochiæ existente, saltem moraliter; unde ipse commode ecclesiæ servitio presto esse possit, et quo sui parochiani facile accedere possint, ut Sacramenta suscipiant. Ideo dicunt *Bonac.* et *Salm.*, non judicari residere illum parochum, qui longe a parochia habitaret tribus milliaribus, nec duobus, ut rationabiliter dicit *La-Croix.* Imo non sine ratione addit idem auctor cum 4. aliis, non sufficienter residere parochum, qui licet inter limites parochiæ habitaret, tamen non facile oves ad eum accurrere possunt.—N. 124.

6. Quæritur 2. Quo sensu accipiendæ erunt quatuor causæ superius descriptæ a Tridentino? Et I. pro *charitate* christiana intelligitur, quando pastori alio proficiscendum est ad lites componendas, et præsertim inter potentes, aut ad liberandam aliam ecclesiam ab hæresi, aut ab aliis enormibus sceleribus. II. Pro *necessitate* urgenti intelligitur, si pastori illic imminet mortis peculiare periculum: et præcipue pro parochis decrevit S. C. quod ob talem causam potest parochus per sex menses abesse, relicto ibi vicario ex licentia Episcopi, quæ potest prorogari ad aliud temporis spatium, sed elapso anno debet induci ad renumciandam parochiam. Loquendo autem de supradicto periculo, non intelligendum periculum commune, ut esset pestis (ut DD. communiter sentiunt, et S. C. declaravit,) inimicorum invasiones, et hujusmodi; sed intelligitur periculum particulare respectu parochi ipsiusmet (aut Episcopi) v. g. quia ab inimicis vexatur, aut quia suæ valetudini aer nocivus est, modo infirmitas non sit perpetua, et absentia gravi detrimento futura sit gregi, alioquin aut pastori residendum est in loco curæ, aut abdicanda est cura; observetur quod super hoc præcipue de Episcopis sancitum est a Benedicto XIV. in Bulla *Ad universæ* edita. 3. Sept. anni 1746.—Lib. 4. n. 125. v.

Sic. pariter. III. Pro *obedientia* debita intelligitur, si parochus, aut Episcopus abesset, ut Papæ, aut Ordinarii mandatis obsequeretur propter bonum Ecclesiæ, aut reipublicæ, aut quamcumque aliam causam gravem, ut dicit *Tournely*, dummodo absentia sit brevis; si enim diuturna est, requiritur necessitas boni communis, Et hic adverte qoud Episcopus non potest sibi assumere parochum in vicarium, aut visitatorem, etc. et apud se retinere, ut declaravit S. C. Sed hoc limitant *Castrop*, *Barbosa*, *Azor*. et *Vasq*. si nullus alius inveniretur (quod rarissime accidit) qui supplere posset. IV. Pro *utilitate* evidente Ecclesiæ, aut reipublicæ intelligitur, quando contingit pastorem abesse, vel ut Synodo assistat, vel se, aut suos, aut Ecclesiam in negotio gravi apud regium tribunal defendat, ut dicunt *Soto*, *Bonac*. *Vasq*. *Ronc*. et *Salm*. cum decisione Rot. rom. Hoc tamen, intelligitur semper ex licentia, et modo adsit alius, qui assistere possit. Et Benedictus XIV. dicit in citata Bulla, quod, si agatur de lite propriæ familiæ, non concedendam Episcopis aliam licentiam præter menses conciliares.—N. 125.

7.—Quæritur 3. An licentia, quam obtinere debet parochus, valeat si data sit oretenus tantum? Affirmant *Lessius* et alii, dicentes scripturam tantum requiri quoad forum, non autem quoad validitatem. Contra id negant *Sanch*. et *Castropal*. qui dicunt a Concilio requiri licentiam in *scriptis pro forma*, uti loquuntur, alias nullius esset roboris. Sed cum hoc non constet, putant *Viva* et *Croix* probabilem esse *Lessii* opinionem. Imo *Coninch*. et *Reginald*. admittunt etiam licentiam tacitam Episcopi cum consensu de *præsenti*. Addit *Mazzata* sufficere etiam licentiam præsumptam de *futuro*, sen interpretativam; sed *La-Croix* dicit hanc a nemine admitti. Et S. C. declaravit præfatam licentiam debere esse expressam.—Lib. 4. n. 123. v. Hic autem.

8.—Quæritur 4. An parochus (aut Episcopus) teneatur ad restitutionem fructuum, foris morando sine licentia, sed ex causa certe justa? *P. Viva* ait (Opusc. 3. q. 3. a. 3. ad 7.) parochum tunc peccare contra jus positivum, sed non contra naturale, ex quo

infert non teneri nisi post sententiam ad fructuum restitutionem. Sed huic opinioni nescio acquiescere, dum Concilium vult respectu parochorum pro tempore absentiæ (ut superius dictum est) non solum probandam causam, sed etiam substitutum, qui sufficitur. Et quoad Episcopos declaravit Benedictus XIV. (ut dictum est *n.* 3.) comprehendi sub nomine trangressorum eos, qui derelinquunt diœceses ultra *tres menses absque legitima causa, et expressa Pontificis licentia.* Et animadvertendum quod transgressores juxta Concilium, et Bullam Benedicti, in pœnam non solum damnati sunt ad fructuum restitutionem, sed etiam ad eos non acquirendos, dum ibi dicitur: *non facere fructus suos.* Hinc etiam ex lege positiva mihi videntur teneri ad restitutionem fructuum, quos perceperunt non suos; cum enim delinquunt in ecclesia derelinquenda sine licentia, fructus acquirere non possunt.—Lib. 4. n. 127. Saltem (dico ego) est dubium an in tali causa possit pastor suos facere fructus prædictos, et in dubio justi tituli nemo potest juste rerum acquirere dominium, ut dicetur *tr. X. n.* 8. *et seqq. et* 144. cum agemus de dominio.—Cit. n. 127. Cæterum nescirem condemnare parochum illum, qui ex causa evidenter justa discederet, et œconomum idoneum alias jam approbatum ab Episcopo, et qui actu jam reperiretur in parochiæ servitio, relinqueret.

9.—Quæritur 5. An parochus, delinquendo in residentia teneatur ad omnium fructuum tempori absentiæ correspondentium restitutionem. Affirmat Navarr., ex eo quia concilium indefinite obligat ad restitutionem. Nihilominus probabiliter dicunt Barbosa, Bonac. et Viva cum Vasq. et communi, ut asserit, teneri tantum ad eam partem quæ residentiæ oneribus respondet: dum fructus non tantum ad hoc dantur ut hæc onera sustineantur, sed etiam obalia, nempe ob horas canonicas, missam, etc. Quare cum concilium non expresserit contrarium, præsupponitur in hoc se remisisse naturali rationi, quæ dictat neminem privandum tota mercede qui jam parti onerum assumtorum satisfecit.—Lib. 4, n. 127, dub. 4.

10.—Quæritur 6. Cuinam restituendi sunt fructus a pastoribus non residentibus. Cæteri beneficiati, si

omittunt recitare horas canonicas, possunt restituere pauperibus cujusvis loci aut fabricæ ecclesiæ aut domus beneficii ; sed pastores non residentes, uti præcepit Trid., (sess. 23, c. 1.) debent eos applicare omnino *fabricæ ecclesiæ vel pauperibus loci.* Nec sufficit eos applicare animabus purgatorii illius regionis, missas aut alias preces offerendo ; nam revera animæ defunctorum nequeunt amplius dici illius regionis. Dicit tamen p. Viva cum Lessio quod bene possit parochus sibi illos applicare, si vere pauper, sit: dummodo id non efficeret in fraudem, nempe si deesset residentiæ animo sibi applicandi restitutionem faciendam : *fraus* enim *nulli patrocinari debet.* Præterea, posset parochus fructus sibi retinere, si pauperes ei illos donarent : sed postquam ad eorum manus illi pervenerint ; antea enim pauperes non possunt illos remittere, cum ipsi non acquirant dominium illorum fructuum, nisi post traditionem sibi factam.—Lib. 4, n. 128.

11.—2. Parochi aut alii curati per se ipsos tenentur ad sacramentorum administrationem. Quoad sacramentum Pœnitentiæ attinet, parochus tenetur illud administrare non solum tempore præcepti et in casibus gravis necessitatis, sed toties quoties (ut communiter Lugo, Azor, Busemb., Salm., Holzm., etc., contra Sylvest. et pauciores,) pœnitentes confiteri etiam ex devotione petunt ; nisi, ut recte excipit Aversa, illi intempestive et nimis frequenter vellent audiri ; aut nisi essent alii confessarii, et ipse esset legitime impeditus.—Lib. 6, n. 623. Unde dicunt La-Croix, Gobat., Conc. et Salm. peccare illum parochum qui redditur morosus et difficilis ad audiendas confessiones ; præsertim si fuerit accitus ab infirmis, quibus, ut præcepit S. Carolus Borromæus, statim et qualibet hora accurrere debet. Si tamen curatus semel atque iterum extra necessitatem renueret alicujus confessionem audire, probabiliter dicunt Suar. et La-Croix, cum Arriaga, contra Bonacinam, non peccare graviter, dummodo non adesset aliqua urgens necessitas, v. gr. jubilæi, festivitatis solemnis, ut limitat Aversa.—N. 623. Si autem parochus haberet œconomum ab episcopo approbatum, non tenetur cum tanto

rigore confessionibus audiendis vacare ; sed ei animadvertendum est quod certus debet fieri œconomum idoneum esse tam quoad scientiam quam quoad mores, alias rationem Deo ipse redditurus est de omnibus damnis quæ ob ejus ignorantiam et pravos mores evenient. Semper expediens erit, obiter hic notamus, ut parochus interdum arcessat confessarios exteros propter animas verecundas, præsertim si eo concionator quadragesimalis non solet accedere au audiendas confessiones.

12.—Quoad communionem pariter communiter dicunt dd. teneri parochum ad eam subministrandam quoties rationabiliter et opportune de eo expostulatur ; dum pastor non solum debet prospicere ut ejus oves præcepta adimpleant, sed etiam ut iis auxiliis præmuniantur quæ eorum profectui conferre possunt. Hinc sancitum fuit ex decreto S. C. anno 1679, approbato ab Innoc. XI, pastores, episcopi nempe aut parochi, licet ex justis causis possint communionem taxare alicui subdito in particulari, non posse tamen præscribere dies communionis pro omnibus generatim, sed debere in hoc remitti judicio confessariorum.— Lib. 6. n. 253 et 254. Circa viaticum, quando possit et debeat dari, observa quod dicetur in opusculo *De assistentia moribundorum*, sec. 4, n. 2.

13.—Tenentur quoque parochi curare ut pueri communionem paschalem suscipiant cum illius capaces sunt, nempe, regulariter loquendo, cum pervenerint ad decimum usque ad duodecimum annum, ut dicunt Lugo, Castrop., Salm., Dicast., etc., aut saltem usque ad quartumdecimum, uti dicunt Suar., Laym., Wigandt, Antoine et La-Croix. Sed S. Carolus Borromæus in nona synodo diœcesana præcepit suis parochis ut habiles redderent communioni omnes pueros decennes : et quidam parochi postea difficiles se præbent ad communionem dandam pueris duodecim annos natis ; sed cur ? Ne sibi assumant onus eos instruendi. Proh quot parochi hanc suam obligationem negligunt, quæ utique levis mininime dicenda est !

14.—Quoad Extremam Unctionem, sub gravi tenentur parochi ad eam ministrandam iis qui exposcunt. Et animadvertant quod docet Catechismus

Rom. (part. 2, cap. 6, n. 18,): "Gravissime peccant qui illud tempus ægrotos ungendi observare solent cum omni salutis spe amissa, vita et sensibus carere incipiunt."

15.—An autem parochi tempore pestis teneantur residere et sacramenta ministrare cum periculo vitæ: quod ad residentiam spectat, communiter docent dd. ad eam teneri, cum S. Thoma, qui sic ait, (2. 2. q. 185, n. 5,) "Ubi salus subditorum exigit pastoris præsentiam, non debet pastor gregem deserere propter aliquod periculum imminens." Excipit tamen S. Doctor casum quo pastor possit sufficienter per alios providere, sed non loquitur de tempore pestis. Cæterum habemus apud Fagnandum, (in cap. Clericus, de cleric. non resid., n. 38,) Gregorium XIII declarasse tempore pestis omnino teneri parochos residere; et alio decreto, ut refert Fagnanus ibidem, declaravit teneri etiam episcopos residere, cum potestate tamen, ut dixit, residendi in aliqo tuitiori diœcesis loco, et illius prospicere necessitatibus. Quoad sacramentorum administrationem, approbando decretum S. C. concilii an. 1576, ita declaravit: "Parochum suis parochianis peste laborantibus teneri administrare dumtaxat sacramenta ad salutem necessaria, nempe Baptismum et Pœnitentiam." Cum igitur dixerit *dumtaxat*, declaravit parochos liberos esse ab obligatione ministrandi communionem et Extremam Unctionem peste laborantibus. Imo subjunxit quod possint ipsa sacramenta, Baptismi et Pœnitentiæ per alios idoneos ministrare, se ipsos servando ad audiendas confessiones bene valentium, qui alias ab ipsis abhorrerent, si viderent eos accedere ad morbo decumbentes.—Lib. 6, n. 233. Advertunt tamen Suarez, Holzm., Conc., Castrop., Spor., et alii communiter quod si peste laborans, modo sensu careat, multo ab hinc tempore non sit confessus, et probabiliter parochus putaret illum esse in peccata mortali, tunc tenetur etiam cum periculo vitæ eum Extrema Unctione munire.—Lib. 3, n. 729.

16.—3. Parochi aut alii curati sæculares aut regulares, et eo magis episcopi, tenentur orare et celebrare missam non solum ut populus ei intersit, sed etiam

applicare fructum pro illo singulis dominicis et festis, ut novissime statuit Benedictus XIV in Bulla *Cum semper*, anno 1744, declarans hoc valere etiamsi curatus congruam non haberet (*licet*, verba bullæ, *congruis redditibus destituatur*,) et quamvis alicubi adsit consuetudo immemorabilis in contrarium. Et si parochia vacaret, facultatem dedit episcopo assignandi œconomo congruam portionem fructuum, ut ipse pariter in festis possit celebrare pro populo. Tribuit pariter facultatem episcopis dispensandi cum aliquo parocho qui aliter non posset vivere, ut possit applicare in festis pro dantibus sibi eleemonsynam, cum onere supplendi diebus ferialibus pro populo. Item ibidem declaravit missam conventualem, quæ quotidie cantatur a clero ecclesiarum, debere applicari pro benefactoribus in genere cujusque ecclesiæ.—Lib. 3, n. 359 et lib. 6, n. 325, qu. 2.

17.—4. Parochi et tanto magis episcopi tenentur etiam cum periculo vitæ ad corripiendos subditos qui in peccato mortali existunt aut in proximo periculo labendi in illud ; et non solum in eorum extrema necessitate sed etiam in gravi, semper ac fulget emendationis spes, ut communiter docent Suar., Bonac., Valent., Coninch., Salm., etc., cum S. Thoma.—2. 2. q. 185, a. 5, lib. 3, n. 360, v. Parochi. Addimus cum Cajet., Sanch., Castrop., Diana, Ronc., Holzm., et aliis communissime, contra paucos, ad id teneri pastores non solum ex charitate sed etiam ex justitia : propterea enim a communitate stipendium recipiunt ut ipsi pro viribus curent impedire vitia cujuslibet suæ ovis ; ideoque, cum deliquerint graviter in eo debito justitiæ, remanent etiam obligati ad fructuum restitutionem.—Lib. 3, n. 360, v. Sed dub. 1.

18.—Et cum ab aliquo potente reperitur aliquod scandalum dari cui parochus non posset occurrere, debet ille episcopum certiorem facere, ut de remedio occurrat. Et si forsan episcopus in hoc negligens esset, aut alia remedia opportuna tentare ; et non debet hoc negligere ob quemcumque humanum respectum aut timorem. In summa, hoc est quod evangelium clamat, quod *bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis.* Cum in regione reperiuntur no-

tabiles morum dissolutiones quibus nullum occurrit remedium, parochus tenetur curare ut missio eo adveniat (ille parochus qui missionem non curat, suspicionem ingerit suorum morum; boni enim parochi non prætermittunt quarto aut quinto quoque anno missonem arcessere). Denique ubi nihil intentatum reliquit ut consuleret malo, etsi, generaliter loquendo, non esset præcisa obligatio faciendi correctionem, cum nulla subest spes profectus, non debet ideo parochus eam omittere, et etiam eam identidem repetat peccatoribus obstinatis, saltem in casu quo periculum non subesset aliquod grave damnum subeundi: inserviet saltem illa correctio ad hoc ne parochus ab aliis subditis male audiat; cum videant scandalum durare et pastorem obdormiscere: præterquamquod, correctio inserviet ne alii in exemplum inducantur in peccatis sordescere, cum vident neminem adesse qui eos corripiat aut exprobret.

19.—Et pastor non solum tenetur peccata et scandala jam incœpta auferre, sed etiam illa quæ facile postmodum excitari possunt impedire. Præ cæteris præcipue debent impedire quominus sponsi accedant ad domum sponsarum: nam quamvis initio non accedant cum pravo fine, nihilominus experientia docet quod in hujusmodi occasione quasi omnes sponsi postea in peccata labuntur, et secum in illa trahunt etiam parentes qui permittunt eos versari cum sponsis. Quare debet parochus omnibus modis curare ut impediatur hæc spiritualis ruina duarum familiarum ex hac causa proveniens, quæ ruina perseverabit usque dum matrimonium contrahetur, præsertim si sponsalia jam sunt inita. Ideoque cuilibet parocho elaborandum esset ne verba sponsorum acciperet, nisi paulo ante matrimonium contrahendum; cum experientia observemus, initis sponsalibus, totum illud temporis spatium inter nuptias intercedens esse tempus peccatorum.

20.—Ad hæc debet parochus apud Episcopum impedire, ne habitus clericalis conferatur adolescentulis, aut pueris qui suis moribus non sunt aliis exemplo, aut saltem indolem ecclesiasticam non præ se ferunt; nam si ipsi tacent, et sinunt eos induere habitum

clericalem, illi postea adolescerent in otio, et exui habitum erubescentes, per fas et nefas, quanquam vitiis onusti niterentur ordinari, et religioni magnæ essent perniciei, cui in principio facile parochus potuisset occurrere; post vero desperabitur remedium. Et ideo clericos, qui jam initiati reperiuntur, curet saltem instruere, et per semitas vitæ devotæ dirigere, ut boni ecclesiastici evadant. Igitur quam rationem reddituri sunt illi parochi, qui fidem faciunt, illos ordinandos Sacramenta frequentare, et bonis esse moribus, quos sciunt nec esse assiduos in Sacramentorum susceptione, nec aliis bono exemplo, sed potius scandalo fuisse! Quid miserius esse potest, quam cernere clericos, qui vix bis, aut ter in anno confessi sunt et communicaverunt, parochi fides audacter præsentare qualibet hebdomada, aut bis in mense fuisse confessos, et communicasse! De hujusmodi parochis, qui has fides præstant, dicendum est defecisse a Fide, nam certe de omnibus flagitiis, quæ committunt isti sic sine Dei vocatione promoti, et de omnibus iis, quorum ipsi aliis causa sunt, parochus sibi Deum vindicem facit, cum Episcopi in hoc parochis omnem fidem committunt. Sed Episcopi diligentiores non quiescunt in parochorum attestationibus in hac materia tanti momenti, unde salus populi pendet, nec parochus coram Deo excusabitur, si fidem facit ex aliorum attestatione, nisi de eo, quod testatur circa Sacramentorum frequentiam; et bonos mores, plus quam certus fiat.

21.—Non tantum tenentur parochi ad correctionem faciendam, et ad impedienda peccata, et scandala, quæ vident, sed etiam ad diligentius inquirendum, an in regione adsit aliquis subditus, qui in aliquo peccato versetur, et suo muneri non satisfaciat; parocho enim commissa est salus uniuscujusque ovis. Ita communiter docet DD. Cajetanus, Laym. Soto, Salmant. et alii cum S. Thoma (2. 2. q. 33. a. 2. ad 4.), qui ait: "Qui habet specialem curam alterius debet eum quærere ad hoc, ut corrigat de peccato."—L. 3. n. 360. Dubit. II. Præsertim invigilare debet ut subditi omnes præcepto paschali satisfaciant, sine personarum acceptione; proptereaque cavere debet ne schedulas

Communionis committat alicui clerico. Elapso jam tempore paschali, diligenter debet inquirere de iis, qui forte non adimpleverint præceptum: (Barb. de offic. par. c. 2. n. 7. et Segneri paroch. instruct. cap. 23.) et debet eos monere, qui si non resipuerint, deferat ad Episcopum, ut excommunicatione, aut interdicto saltem in illos animadvertant. Hoc quidem aliqui parochi efficiunt cum personis popularibus, connivent autem et sopore torpentur cum aliis majoris existimationis. Quot istorum in Missionibus reperiuntur, qui per multos annos omiserunt præcepto satisfacere, quin de hoc parochus verbum quidem admonitionis cum eis impenderit! Præterea cum aliquod matrimonium contrahendum erit, debet inquirere, si aliquod subsit impedimentum, et si probabiliter putat, subesse, tenetur suam eis negare assistentiam et nuptias suspendere, donec saltem certior fiat Episcopus, ut ipse quid faciendum decidat, ut communiter Sanchez, La-Croix, Ledesma, Vega, et alii cum Lugo, qui cum Coninch. addit, quod si Ordinarius sciat aliquod impedimentum occultum, debet matrimonium prohibere, licet hoc privata scientia noscat, et nequeat probare.—Lib. 6. n. 54.

22.—V. Parochi tenentur instructiones, et consciones facere. Quoad instructionem debent instruere et docere plebem Mysteria Fidei, quæ sciri et credi debent, et quæ necessaria sunt ad salutem, prout sunt 1. Quatuor Mysteria principalia, nimirum esse unum Deum, et hunc esse omnipotentem, sapientissimum, Creatorem, et Dominum universi, misericordem, et amabilem super omnia, præcipue vero esse justum remuneratorem bonis, et malis; item Mysteria SS. Trinitatis, et Incarnationis, ac mortis Jesu Christi. 2. Sacramenta necessaria, quæ sunt Baptismus, Eucharistia, et Pœnitentia; cetera saltem cum suscipienda sunt; et dispositiones necessarias, ut hæc suscipiantur. 3. Articulos symboli Fidei, et hos inter præsertim Virginitatem sanctissimæ Mariæ; Sessionem Jesu Christi ad dexteram Patris, nimirum ipsum in cœlo esse in æquali gloria cum Patre: Resurrectionem mortuorum in finali judicio a Jesu Christo faciendo: Unitatem Ecclesiæ romanæ, in qua tantum reperitur

salus; et tandem æternitatem paradisi, et inferni. Quæ omnia quilibet fidelis tenetur scire sub gravi. 4. Præcepta Decalogi, et Ecclesiæ. 5. *Pater Noster* et *Ave Maria*, et actus Fidei, Spei, Amoris, et contritionis. Itaque sicut graviter peccat, qui negligit hæc scire (et quidem non tantum quoad voces, sed etiam, quoad sensum,) ita etiam graviter peccat parochus, ut communiter DD. si per se, vel per alios idoneos (ipso legitime impedito, ut loquitur Conc. Trid. sess. 5. c. 2.) non curat ea docere saltem quoad substantiam suos subditos, pueros, et adultos, qui ea ignorant. Hinc cum animadvertit, parentes, aut dominos non curare, ut filii, aut famuli intersint doctrinæ christianæ, tenetur cum Episcopo de opportuno remedio consilium capere, qui, ut habetur in Trid. sess. 24. c. 4. de ref. potest etiam per censuras ecclesiasticas ad id parentes cogere. Boni pastores adnotatos tenent pueros, ut sciant quis eorum desit suas in hoc adimplere partes. Imo ait La-Croix 1. 2. n. 174. et 1. 3. p. 1. n. 767. si adessent alii rudes, qui adire ecclesiam nequeant, quia custodiunt domum, aut greges, cum in gravi necessitate spirituali reperiuntur, debere parochum eo proficisci, ad eos instruendos *cum quantocumque suo incommodo*, ut loquitur præfatus auctor. Saltem nos dicimus, cum hoc ei maximæ molestræ futurum foret ob horum rudium multiplicitatem, curet saltem eos instruere tempore præcepti paschalis, aut cum accedunt ad suscipiendum Sacramentum Confirmationis, aut ad contrahendum matrimonium. Expedit etiam, ut exploret magistros, et magistras, an possint recte docere pueros et puellas doctrinam christianam, et media conducentia ad in timore Dei vivendum.

23.—Quoad concionem, parochus tenetur ad concionandum omnibus dominicis, ut præcepit Trident. sess. 5. c. 2. de ref. (circa quod vide Tract. VI. n. 5.) Sed hic advertendum per Tridentinum non solum impositum esse parochis pascere greges verbo divino; sed etiam eos pascere pro captu eorum, facilitate sermonis, ut percipiant quod prædicatur. Cum enim verum sit quod Fides sicut diffunditur, ita conservatur prædicatione, *Fides ex auditu;* parum aut nihil pro-

derunt populis conciones illæ, quæ non sunt conformes modo, quem tenuit Jesus Christus, et apostoli secuti sunt, qui prædicarunt non *in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis, sed in ostentatione spiritus, et veritatis*, ut fatetur S. Paulus. Ideoque merito V. P. M. Avila non Christi ministros, sed proditores vocabat eos concionatores, qui ex vanitate prædicant, ut laudes assequantur; et P. Gasp. Santius dicebat quod isti sunt, qui magis Ecclesiam persequuntur, dum sic prædicando causa sunt, cur multæ animæ pereant, quæ per conciones ad apostolorum normam salvarentur. Vana verba, periodi contorti, et sonantes, descriptiones inutiles, dicebat S. Francisc. Sales., sunt pestis concionis; cujus unicus finis esse debet voluntatem auditorum ad bonum movere, non autem inutiliter intellectum pascere; sicuti experientia docemur, hujusmodi exornato stylo concionandi animas vitam non mutare, quia Deus cum vanitate non concurrit. Et hoc dictum sit de omnibus concionatoribus, qui cum vanitate prædicant, sed præcipue de parochis, quibus Tridentinum loco citato hæc præscribit: "Archipresbyteri quoque, plebani, et quicumque curam animarum obtinent per se vel per alios idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus plebes sibi commissas pro sua et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis." Notentur verba illa, pro earum capacitate. Quare certe transgrediuntur Concilii præceptum ilii pastores qui stylo sublimi ultra populi captum prædicant.

24.—Hic etiam juvat advertere nonnulla, quæ valde expedit ut parochus in concionibus populo sæpe sæpius inculcet. Et 1. quod ad emendationem non sufficit peccatum fugere, sed etiam oportet fugere occasionem peccati. Et loquendo de sponsis, qui versantur in domibus sponsarum, dicat tam ipsos, quam illarum parentes, qui hoc permittunt, non posse absolvi, nisi removeant prædictam occasionem. 2. Adurgeat homines ne tabernas adeant, eis patefaciendo innumera peccata, quæ illic, præter ebrietates, committi solent, nempe blasphemiæ, rixæ, scandala, obscœnitates, domesticæ discordiæ, subtractiones victus a familia, etc. 3. Sæpe declamet in vitium

(quod est generale, præcipue in villis) loquendi inhoneste in campis, et in officinis, tanto magis si loquatur coram pueris, et puellis, et aliis diversi sexus. Propter hos pravos sermones quot juvenes depereunt! Et hortetur de hoc parentes, dominos, et magistros officinarum, ut invigilent ad corrigendos, et ad puniendos suos filios, aut famulos, qui ita obloquuntur, præsertim tempore vindemiæ. 4. Instet ad demonstrandam sacrilegii enormitatem, qui confitentur, et communicant, omisso aliquo peccato in confessione ob ruborem, et ut horror concipiatur, curet sæpe sæpius narrare aliquod terribile exemplum eorum qui sacrilege confessi sunt ob ruborem, et postea infelici exitu perierunt, et poterit propterea ad manus habere libellum P. Vegæ, cui titulus: "Casi della confessione," etc.

25.—Insinuet 5. necessitatem doloris, et propositi pro confessione, etiam si illa sit de solis venialibus, hortando ne quis accedat ad absolutionem, nisi vere doleat saltem de aliquo peccato veniali eorum, de quibus se accusat, aut nisi materiam certam vitæ anteactæ exponat, cujus se vere pœnitet, ut valida fiat confessio. At quoniam rudes parum capiunt quomodo debeat esse hic dolor, sæpe explicet, quod quisque pœnitens, ut valide confiteatur (sive dolor sit contritionis, sive attritionis) debet ita pœnitere sui peccati, ut illud odio habeat, et detestetur super omnia mala.

26.—Hortetur 6. ut in iræ motibus, pro blasphemando, et imprecando, assuescant dicere: "Male habeat peccatum meum; male vertat dæmoni: aut Domina mea adjuva me; Domina mea concede mihi patientiam. 7. In horrorem ponat superstitiones sive vanas observantias, quæ solent adhiberi ad curandos morbos, aut ad cognoscendos fures, etc. 8. Inculcet parentibus, ut in filios animadvertant, præsertim dum sunt pueri, cum blasphemant, aut furantur, etc. Insuper invigilet ad observandum, et sciscitandum cum quibus illi versantur, et interdicat ne cum malis sociis comitentur, aut personis diversi sexus familiariter utantur. Præterea ne in proprio lecto filios cubare faciant, vel nimis parvos ne suffocentur, aut

ætate provectos (puta si 6. annos excesserint) ne illi scandalum patiantur, et tanto minus permittant mares, et femellas in eodem lecto dormire.

27.—Hortetur 9. persæpe suos auditores, ut tentationes internas (præcipue impuritatis) arceant invocando SS. Nomina Jesu et Mariæ. Hoc est maximum remedium adversus tentationes. 10. Instet jugiter ad hortandum, ut, cum quis in mortale prolapsus est, statim contritionis efficiat actum, quo gratiam amissam recuperare possit, cum proposito quantocius confitendi; et ab eis deducat hanc dæmonis fraudem, nempe quod tam Deus parcit duobus quam uni peccato; cum contingere possit quod Deus expectet post primum, et post secundum suo auxilio eos destituat.

28.—11. Doceat actus quos quilibet facere debet cum cubitu surgit, nempe gratiarum actionum, oblationis et supplicationis, ter *Ave* recitando in honorem Mariæ SS. et proponendo vitare omne peccatum et illud præsertim in quod sæpius labi solitus est, divinam Matrem supplicando ut ab illo eum liberet: et hortetur omnes matres ut hoc practicari faciant quolibet mane a suis filiis. In concionibus significet parentes teneri ad curandum ut filii sacramenta frequentent; ea enim non frequentando, facile a Dei gratia excident: et huic tanto damno parentes consulere debent. Dicat etiam quod ipsi peccant si sine justa causa filios a matrimonio aut a religione, avertunt, aut eos ad matrimonium invitos cogunt; sicut contra peccant filii qui se matrimonio conjungunt, parentibus juste dissentientibus. Vide quod dicemus de sponsalibus *tract.* 18, n. 10.

29.—12. Cum verum sit, ut supra diximus, quod parochus non solum tenetur impedire malum sed etiam ad promovendum bonum, hortetur populum ad Visitationem SS. Sacramenti et beatessimæ, Virginis. Hanc visitationem potest ipse in communi cum populo obire, uti moris est in pluribus regionibus. Et dicat quod qui ad ecclesiam convenire nequeunt, saltem e domo hanc faciant. Maxime insinuet ut congregationem homines frequentent et omnes communionem, prævia præparatione et subsequentibus gratiarum

actionibus per actum fidei, amoris, oblationis et petitionis, docendo eos modum practicum quo fieri debent.

30.—13. Curet sæpe ut populus singulari studio Mariæ SS. devotionem prosequatur, insinuando quanta sit ejus potentia et misericordia erga suos devotos. Idcirco insinuet ut recitent rosarium in communi quotidie una cum familia, ut jejunent sabbato et celebrent novenas septem festivitatum, quas ex altari annunciet populo quoties aliqua novena accidit. Expediet propterea ut sabbato ille conciunculam faciat, narrando aliquod exemplum beatiss. Virginis, et semel in anno celebret aliquam novenam solemniorem cum sermone et expositione venerabilis; et propterea uti poterit inter cæteros libro quem typis edidi, cui titulus: *Glorie di Maria*, ubi collectam reperiet materiam et exempla. Felix ille parochus qui suas oves ferventes tenet erga devotionem Mariæ! nam illæ, Virgine opitulante, recte vivent et advocatam in vitæ exitu potentem experientur.

31.—Tandem potissimum insinuet usum petitionis, nempe ut sæpe se Deo commendent, ab eo præsertim sanctam perseverantiam postulando propter Jesu, et Mariæ amorem: sæpius explicando quod divina gratia, et præcipue donum perseverantiæ non obtinentur, nisi petantur: Petite, et accipietis. Et publicet sæpe illam magnam Jesu Christi promissionem, quod quicquid Patrem petierimus in ejus nomine, Pater dabit nobis: "Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—Joan. xvi. 23. Insinuet etiam instanter usum orationis mentalis, et curet faciendam in ecclesia una cum populo quolibet die, aut saltem quolibet die festo: docendo etiam modum quo fieri potest domi. Modus practicus orationem mentalem faciendi ponetur in fine Tomi III. in appendice I. De directione animarum spiritualium. n. 2. ad 5. et append. IV. sec. III. Sed hic mihi concedatur conceptum animi dolorem foras aperire. Proh magnam infelicitatem! Quam pauci sunt illi parochi, et confessarii, qui curam hanc sibi suscipiunt insinuandi suis pœnitentibus hoc tam magni momenti exercitium orationis mentalis, sive

meditationis, sine quo valde difficile est animam posse perseverare in Dei amicitia, et impossibile est in viam perfectionis se immittere. Si aliqua attentio in hac re adhiberetur, quot animæ viderentur in Dei amorem accendi! Sed hoc quis non operatur, ne sibi aliquid incommodi suscipiat: alius ne stimulos suæ exprobantis conscientiæ sentiat in suadendo aliis bonum quod ipse negligit. Summa hæc est, quod curæ hoc non est, quia parum diligitur Jesus Christus. Oh si parochi et confessarii multum diligerent Jesum Christum, a quot efficerent ut amaretur, et eos ab inferno liberarent! Igitur exorandus Dominus est ut, si velit amari ab animabus, faciat se amari a sacerdotibus.

32.—Præter descriptas obligationes, quæ sunt principales, supersunt aliæ parocho quæ etiam non sunt minoris. 1. Tenetur ipse cæteris esse bono exemplo. Pastor enim est illa lucerna *lucens et ardens* quæ in evangelio describitur, ardens zelo sancto et interno, et lucens bono exemplo in externo. Secus ipse prædicet et moneat alios pro viribus, quantum velit, ad incedendum per virtutum semitas: nisi ipse præcedat exemplo, subditi ne fidem quidem præstabunt iis quæ ipse dicit; nam homines *magis oculis quam auribus credunt*, ut loquitur concil. urcellense, Tract. 3, de Offic. Cler. 2. Debet sedulo assistere moribundis et præsertim peccatoribus habituatis, qui peculiari assistentia magnopere indigent. Verum est quod parochus potest hanc assistentiam committere aliis sacerdotibus, sed non debet fidere cuilibet sacerdoti; nam in hac occasione assistenti moribundis possunt accidere scandala non mediocris damni. 3. Tenetur succurrere pauperibus ex parochiæ redditibus qui supersunt, deducto tamen suo et etiam suorum, si ipsi vere sunt pauperes, alimento. Observetur in hoc quod dicetur Tract. 13, cap. 2, de Beneficiatis. 4. Tenetur diligenter examinare obstetrices utrum sciant quid ipsas oportet scire ad conferendum Baptismum infantibus in casu necessitatis, et habetur in Rituali Rom. *de bapt. pueris*, nam talis casus sæpe potest eis accidere; ideoque sub gravi ipsæ tenentur scire administrare Baptismum, ut dicunt S. Antonius,

Reginald., Avers., etc.—Lib. 6, n. 117, v. Quoad. Præterea, parochus debet observare circa Baptismum quod præscribit parochis Rituale Rom.; nimirum 1. ut notent in libro distincto nomina baptizatorum, parentum et patrinorum; 2. ut admoneant patrinos de cognatione et de eorum obligatione contracta; 3. ut admoneant matres et nutrices ne secum accumbere faciant pueros: nihilominus adnotant Barb., Anacl., et Tourn, et alii communiter, talem obligationem cessare, si omne periculum cessaret, v. g. si lectum fuisset spatiosum, et puer cæteroquin ob frigus quiescere non posset, et mulier soleret suum situm dormiendo retinere.—Lib. 6, n. 160.

Notandum ultimo quod Benedictus XIV in const. 9, edita die 13 Dec. 1740, incipiente *Ad passionis, &c., bullar., tom.* 1, mandat in virtute s. obedientiæ omnibus parochis sive rectoribus, etc. ut singulis feriis sextis hora tertia post meridiem in omnibus ecclesiis cathedralibus et parochialibus campanam pulsare faciant, ut fideles lucrari possint indulgentiam centum annorum, recitando flexis genibus quinque *Pater et Ave* et orando juxta intentionem pontificis.

33.—Tandem a bonis parochis pendent boni mores et salus populorum. Si in regione bonus parochus adest, ibi videbitur florere devotio, sacramentorum frequentia, oratio mentalis et bonum exemplum; sin autem parochus erit pravus, tota regio vitiis et scandalis redundabit.

DE EPISCOPI MUNERIBUS.

34.—Pluribus aliis oneribus, præ parochis, episcopus tenetur. Præ cæteris, 1. circa ordinationes clericorum eligere in altaris ministros dignos dumtaxat et excludere indignos. S. Franciscus Salesius contremiscebat dum hanc obligationem perpendebat: ideoque Sanctus neminem ad ordines admittebat quam bona vita non comitabatur, nulla in hoc habita ratione commendationum, nobilitatis nec doctrinæ subjecti; dum doctrina quæ malam vitam sociam habet majori detrimento est, quia vitio auctoritatem adducit. Unde fiebat quod paucos promovebat, prout

hodie factitant boni episcopi: cum pauci sint, ut veritatem fatear, qui sacerdotio initientur ex vera vocatione et ut gloriam Deo præstent; et hinc fit quod pauci sacerdotes sunt qui boni evadant et utiles animabus. Dicebat ipsemet Sanctus non esse Ecclesiæ necessarios multos sacerdotes sed bonos.

35.—Duo debet episcopus examinare in iis qui ad ordines anhelant: spiritum et doctrinam. Circa spiritum et mores, parum tutus est ille episcopus qui attestationibus parochorum confidit. Hæ plerumque fiunt ob humanos respectus. Nec episcopus potest tantum acquiescere soli bonitati negativæ ordinandi, ut dicit S. Thomas, nempe quod nihil sciat mali de illo, sed oportet ut ejus bonitatem positivam cognoscat, tales notitias habendo ut sufficientia præstent indicia quod ille vero spiritu ecclesiæ sit donatus. Dicit S. Paulus, (1 ad Tim., iii.) oportere sacerdotem (qui etiam sub nomine episcopi comprehenditur a Ss. Patribus, ut a S. Ambrosio, S. Joanne Chrysostomo, S. Thomas et aliis) non esse neophytum, nimirum, ut explicat Angelicus, *non solum ætate sed etiam perfectione.* Quare ait Trident., sess. 23, cap. 12, eos tantum debere assumi ad ordines sacros *quorum probata vita senectus sit*, significans eos bono habitu debere esse dotatos et debere esse senes in virtute, juxta illud Sapientiæ: "Ætas senectutis vita immaculata."—iv. 9. Propterea episcopi zelantes non firmare solent supplices libellos, nisi prius secreto certi facti fuerint de eorum morum probitate a pluribus personis fide dignis quæ noscunt subjectum. Advertatur hoc attente; quia hoc est medium valde efficax, imo necessarium episcopo, ut tutam faciat suam conscientiam in ordinationibus quas habet. Ex his enim secretis cognitionibus episcopus potest certus fieri non solum si clericus ludis, insolentiis, pravis consuetudinibus sit aliis scandalo, sed etiam si positive vitam spiritualem agit, ecclesias, orationem, sacramenta frequentando; si solitarie vivit aut saltem cum bonis sociis comitetur; si studio dat operam, si modesto habitu et sermone incedit et hujusmodi. Et si forsan notitiam habeat de scandalo positivo alicujus, tunc non debet sibi satis esse ordinariam

probationem exigere, sed multorum annorum resipiscentiam observare debet; cum suspicio rationabilis tunc suboriatur quod omne ab eo simulatione fiat ut ordines assequatur.

36.—Juxta primævam Ecclesiæ disciplinam, ei qui in unum mortale lapsus fuisset aditus ad ordines penitus præcludebatur, ut testantur S. Hieronymus, S. Isidorus et alii. Deinde aliquibus post sæculis excludebantur perpetuo ab ordinibus saltem illi qui ob aliquod grave facinus diffamati fuissent. Concedimus hac nostra tempestate tantum rigorem non ubique practicari; nihilominus certum est, ut supra vidimus, nullum posse admitti ad ordines qui prius in virtutibus probatus non sit et præcipue in diuturna continentia, quam ordinati in sacris profiteri debebunt. Habemus in c. Nullus, dist. 25, ex S. Gregorio: "Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium fuerit approbata."—Lid. 1, epist. 42. Et requirit S. Pontifex ut hujusmodi probatio habeatur a multis annis, dicens: "Ne unquam ii qui ordinati sunt pereant, prius aspiciatur, si vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit." Hanc eamdem probationem requirit Trident., (sess. 23, c. 13, de ref.) dum præscribit ordines sacros non conferri nisi iis qui in minoribus ordinibus probati sunt, nimirum quorum bonæ vitæ experientia habeatur.

37.—Summa igitur hæc est quod non potest dubitari quin episcopus graviter peccet admittendo ad ordines sacros indignum; indignus autem est quicumque sufficientem probationem non dedit de sua positiva bonitate. Rationem affert S. Thomas, dicens, (2. 2. q. 184, a. 6.) ad ordinem sacrum requiri majorem sanctitatem quam ad statum religiosum, "quia per sacrum ordinem deputatur ad dignissima ministeria." Et alibi, (Suppl. q. 36, a. 1, ad 3.) "Sicut illi qui ordinem suscipiunt super plebem constituuntur gradu ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis." Itaque, juxta S. Thomam, sicut clerici, per ordinem sacrum quem suscipiunt, elevantur ad gradum superiorum super populum christianum, ita debent reperiri superiores merito sanctitatis. Ideoque asserit quod

opus habent eo gratiæ gradu acquisito (intelligitur certe de gratia non *gratis data*, sed de illa quæ nos gratos Deo facit, quia hoc solum meritum sanctitatis producit) quæ eos dignos reddat, ut inter Jesu Christi ministros annumerentur: "Et ideo præexigitur gratia quæ sufficiat ad hoc quod digne connumerentur in plebem Christi." Deinde concludit Sanctus quod non sufficiet episcopo ordinanti, ut aliquem ad ordinem sacrum promoveat, si nihil mali sciat, sed etiam debet esse certus de probitate ordinandi: "Sed amplius exigitur, (sunt Angelici verba,) ut secundum mensuram ordinis injungendi habeatur certitudo de qualitate promovendorum." Et ad hanc rem adducit auctoritatem S. Dionysii, qui dicit neminem in ministrum divinorum, sicut est sacerdos, audere assumi, nisi per diuturnum habitum se Deo conformem cognoscat: "In divino omni non est audendum ducem fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit deiformissimus et Deo simillimus."

38.—Præterea, sicut peccaret Ordinandus, si probitate positiva carens, nempe habitu bonæ vitæ jam acquisito, vellet in sacris Ordinibus initiari, saltem ob periculum, cui se exponit non sustinendi onus, quod suscipit ferendum, et præcipue cœlibatus, sine Dei vocatione, quam certe tunc non est præsumendum habere; ita tanto magis peccaret Episcopus, qui eum ordinaret, si suæ emendationis non præcederet diuturna probatio. Ait S. Thomas 2. 2. q. 189. a. 1. ad 3.: "Ordines sacri præexigunt sanctitatem, unde pondus Ordinum imponendum parietibus jam per sanctitatem desiccatis." Adducit S. doctor similitudinem fabricæ, dicere volens quod, quemadmodum parietes recenter elevati pondus grave sustinere nequeunt; ita iis, qui paulo ante mores mutarunt, et adhuc ab humore vitiorum purgati non sunt, non est imponendus sacer Ordo, qui secum affert debitum perpetuæ continentiæ, et vitæ exemplaris, quam ministrum altaris decet. Itaque Episcopus sacrum Ordinem indigno conferens, duplici titulo peccat: peccat quia suo muneri deest, et peccat quia cooperatur omnibus peccatis, quæ ille committet, et causa erit ut alii etiam peccent. Hoc idem innuit

S. Paulus (1. Timot v. 22.) cum dixit: "Manus cito nemini imposueris, neque communicaveris peccatis alienis." Super quem textum postea dixit S. Leo: "Quid est communicare peccatis alienis, nisi talem effici ordinantem, qualis ille est, qui non meruit ordinari?"

39.—Hactenus circa spiritum, transeamus nunc ad doctrinam, quæ requiritur in eo, qui sacris Ordinibus initiari postulat. Ignorantia in ecclesiasticis non solum sibi, sed etiam aliis nocet; et quod pejus est, ignorantia in sacerdotibus est malum, cui nullum remedium invenitur, ut dicebat S. Franciscus Salesius, aut quia semper incapaces persistent, aut quia, accepto sacerdotio, difficulter cogi poterunt ad studendum. Debet ideo Episcopus maxime curare ut inspiciat an, qui postulat promoveri, sit bene edoctus, et an sit studii cupidus: dum qui studii non est amator, nunquam idoneus erit Ecclesiæ, imo necessario erit pravus, nam (ut dici solet) otium est pater vitiorum. Propterea Prælatus non sibi satis habeat examen quod plerumque solet fieri circa requisita ad Ordines, et super alias res consuetas, quas Ordinandi discunt in aliquo liberculo, sed, postquam ordinati sunt, remanent indocti, uti erant antea. D. Fabricius de Capua fel. rec. Archiepiscopus Salernitanus in suis Ordinationibus, et præsertim sacerdotum, suos Ordinandos examinari faciebat super tota morali. Scio etiam alium Prælatum (Episcopum vigilantem,) qui etiam a clericis circa moralem examen exigebat, unicuique Ordini assignando tractatus, quos scire debeant; itaque ad sacerdotium ascendentes tota morali ita callebant, ut ad confessiones audiendas quisque idoneus reperiretur. O utinam et omnes Episcopi has semitas tenerent, non audirentur utique tot conquestus, uti plerumque audiuntur, quod non invenitur cui confessarii officium committatur! Sed dicet aliquis Concilium Tridentinum non exigere tantam scientiam ab Ordinandis. Sed respondeo quod non prohibet e contrario Concilium, quominus Episcopus id exigat a suis Ordinandis (ut loquuntur PP.), cum videt talem esse suæ diœcesis necessitatem. Tum etiam Concilium tantum statuit quod, si talis

scientia desit, ad Ordines nemo promoveatur, non autem præcepit ut, qui tali scientia præditus esset, ab Ordine repelli non possit. Sed loquendo etiam juxta Tridentinum Concilium Sess. 23. c. 14. dicit quod promovendi ad sacerdotium *ad populum docendum ..... ac ad ministranda Sacramenta diligenti examine comprobentur*. Quibus Innoc. XIII. in Bulla Apostolici ministerii pro Hispania lata, et a Benedicto XIII. pro toto orbe distensa, aliam benignam interpretationem (ut testatur Lambertini postea Benedictus XIV. Notif. 2. n. 16. et. 36.) dare non potuit, quam ut Ordinandi saltem morali theologia callerent.

40.—Quapropter Episcopo incumbendum est, ut seminarium optima directione constitutum habeat, ab hoc enim (statuendo ut nemo Ordines ambiat, qui saltem tres aut quatuor annos ibi commoratus non sit) postea seligentur parochi, confessarii, et cæteri sæcerdotes; et ita poterit diœcesim suam cultam reddere. Dixi *seminarium optima directione constitutum*, alioquin seminarium esset majori perniciei juventuti, et diœcesi. Juvenes qui seminarium ingrediuntur (quantavis diligentia adhibeatur) non omnes erunt angeli: multi non afferunt eo spiritum; sed ibi acquirere debent illum. Igitur si seminarium erit male directum, eveniet quod etiam illi, qui tanquam angeli ingrediuntur, paulo post tempore dæmones evadent, et ipsi suæ vitæ contagione contaminabunt totas suas regiones. Quare Episcopus si ob redituum tenuitatem, aut ob aliquem alium defectum non posset suum seminarium de bonis ministris providere, tenetur penitus illud extinguere, nisi velit Deo tot criminum et scandalorum rationem reddere. Oportet igitur, ut seminarium optima disciplina floreat tam in spiritu, quam in litteris. Quod ad spiritum attinet, 1. In regulis constitutum sit ut nunquam desit meditatio, ut Missæ quotidie intersint, ut adsit lectio spiritualis, visitatio Sacramenti, conscientiæ examen, silentium extra tempus solatii: et hoc omne servetur quotidie. Item qualibet hebdomada confiteantur, et communicent, aut saltem bis in mense, arcessendo bonos et plures confessarios, et etiam alios extraordinarios pluries in anno. Item

quolibet mense sit unus dies solitudinis spiritualis, in quo aliquis pater bono spiritu dotatus faciat sermonem; ac fiant quolibet anno exercitia spiritualia: oporteret etiam statuere, ne tempore feriarum seminaristæ domos adirent, nam tunc (præcipue tempore vindemiarum) isti intermittunt omnia exercitia spiritualia, et illo mense, aut bimestri cum foris vivunt, quantum boni acquisiverunt, amittunt, regrediuntur in seminarium vitiis et peccatis onusti. 2. Debet Episcopus procurare bonum pastorem, qui sit zelo plenus, et experientia exercitatus, qui sit sagax ad suspicandum de unoquoque, et de qualibet actione, et vigilans ad discurrendum per classes, et defectus indagandos, sæpe præfectos interrogando, et etiam aliquem fideliorem seminaristam, qui præventus sit in quolibet classe, ut sibi referat defectus, quos animadverterit. 3. Debet procurare præfectos moribus probatos, qui nunquam a suis classibus absint, nec familiaritatem peculiarem permittant seminaristas inter se habere, et animo forti sint in corripiendo, et fideles sint in referendo apud rectorem qualibet hebdomada delinquentes. 4. Expedit ut Episcopus persæpe adeat seminarium, et semel, aut bis in anno particulare scrutinium faciat, interrogando quemvis seminaristam, an adsit aliquod inconveniens. 5. Præ cæteris debet invigilare Episcopus super pueros, qui in seminarium recipiuntur, operam dando ne ingrediatur aliquis, qui dudum exemplo bono non fuerit, secretas informationes de illorum moribus inquirendo. Satis est habere paucos et bonos, quam multos et imperfectos, qui suæ vitæ turpitudine etiam bonos contaminent. Deinde utendum est stricto rigore, miseratione omni postposita, cum incorrigibilibus, et cum aliquo, qui scandalum positivum præbuerit, v. gr. impuritatis, tumultuationis, furti, etc. Hujusmodi seminarista vix prima vice tolerandus esset post diuturnam, et exemplarem animadversionem; sed tutius consilium est eum statim e seminario expellere, quia talis ovis contagione inquinata potens est totum seminarium corrumpere. In hac re charitatem adhibere non est charitas, sed tyrannis, et injustitia, quia Episcopus ex justitia tenetur damnum commune

evitare. Quod ad scientias attinet, maxime interest ut Episcopus curet sedulo instruendos juvenes in lingua latina, aliter in cæteris scientiis parum proficient, et parum intelligentibus latinitatem parum gratum erit studere. Curet etiam ut addiscant philosophiam (et præcipue logicam, sed meliorem) et theologiam scholasticam, et dogmaticam. Sed præ cæteris in diœcesibus non numerosis necesse est, ut seminaristæ omni sedulitate incumbant morali, ut habiles fiant ad audiendas confessiones, et Episcopus possit eorum opera uti, cum oportebit. Alias cum e seminario profecti sunt, non amplius student, et inutiles Ecclesiæ remanebunt. Expediet etiam ut exerceantur seminaristæ nunc unus in docendis pueris doctrinam christianam qualibet hebdomada, nunc alius in aliqua conciuncula, colloquiis, etc. Ita ipsi et alii erga exercitia apostolica pro tempore, cum egressi fuerint e seminario, amore inflammarentur. Ideoque utilissimum est instruere seminaristas circa talia exercitia. Qui vellet alia circa bonum regimen seminarii, potest observare meum parvum libellum, quem ad hoc typis dedi.

41.—Tenetur II. Episcopus ad eligendos bonos parochos, et bonos confessarios. Quoad parochos, jam coopertum est præferendos esse digniores. Etiam in beneficiis simplicibus probabilior sententia cum S. Thoma et aliis (Lib. 4. n. 93.) requirit præferendos esse digniores, quia hoc exposcit utile commune Ecclesiæ. Sed quoad parochialia certum est ex Trident. Episcopum teneri ad eligendum digniorem spectata qualitate concurrentium, nempe consideratis prudentia, ætate, meritis, sed maxime scientia, et vitæ probitate. Quoad scientiam potest bene Episcopus se conformare examinatorum judicio; sed sua præcipua diligentia sit, ut ipse cognoscat de vitæ probitate, inquirendo notitiam a diversis. In dubium revocanda non est maxima S. Francisci Salesii, quin in curis animarum præferendi sunt sufficienter docti doctioribus, qui spiritu sunt inferiores. Et S. C. de parochorum electione (ap. Piasec. pag. 328. n. 19.) sic decrevit: "Præferendus est minus doctus (modo idoneus) quando ejus mores sunt approbati, doctiori,

cujus vita ignoratur." Pro certo habendum parochum probum uno mense utiliorem esse populo, quam parochus doctior, sed minus probus toto anno.

42.—Tenetur etiam Episcopus se informare ab aliis, an parochi dent operam docendo pueros doctrinam christianam, an prædicent, et an prædicent ad Tridentini præscriptum. De hoc debet Prælatus sæpe admonere prochos, ut parvulis frangant panem verbi divini, hortando etiam eos, ut in concionibus conentur insinuare res, quæ ad usum conducunt, v. gr. quomodo repellendæ sint tentationes, quid dicendum cum occurrunt res adversæ, aut cum injuriis quis afficitur, et hujusmodi. Item perquirant Episcopi, qua diligentia parochi, et confessarii incumbant in audiendas confessiones. In aliquibus locis parochi, et confessarii assistunt etiam choro; sed quid accidit? Accidit quod, dum populus est magis frequens in ecclesia, illi pergunt in chorum, et populus per plures menses differt confiteri: ad hoc Episcoporum est remedium afferre. Item perquirant an parochi sint diligentes, ut pueri capaces decem annos circiter nati communicent, ut supra dictum est. Item, an seduli sint ad colligendas schedulas Communionis paschalis, ut videant an omnes præcepto satisfecerint: si orationis mentalis exercitium perseveret, an visitatio sanctissimi Sacramenti, et beatæ Virginis fiat in communi in ecclesia, ut in multis regionibus in usu est. Et magni refert ut curet Episcopus introduci hunc usum, ubi non est, et restaurari, ubi intermissus est; et confirmari, atque augeri, ubi reperitur. Commendet quoque assistentiam moribundis, et congregationibus secularium. In pluribus locis nostris Missionibus introduximus congregationes puellarum. Hæ ita disponuntur; congregentur in aliqua ecclesia omnes puellæ sexdecim annos et infra natæ, quolibet die dominico vesperi: ibi sacerdos nota probitate ad hoc designatus, præter doctrinam christianam, exhibeat brevem et simplicem sermonem, aut instructionem supra orationem mentalem, aut circa modum suscipiendi Sacramenta, aut circa aliquam virtutem illi ætati convenientem, et postremo assignet devotiones quæ practicari debent ab illis in illa hebdomada; et

præter regulas quæ præscribuntur, sacerdos sæpe in memoriam reducat earum ut non omittant recitare quotidie rosarium, visitare sanctissimum Sacramentum, saltem ex propria domo, conscientiam examinare, sacramenta frequentare saltem semel in hebdomada, ut modesto ornatu ostendantur et hujusmodi. Hæ congregationes sive collectiones puellarum causant postea bonum summum; quia si ipsæ postea nubent, faciliter docebunt filios ea quæ ipsæ factitarunt, et familiæ integræ sanctificabuntur.

43.—Præterea maxima debet esse episcopi diligentia in seligendis confessariis. A confessariis pendet directio conscientiarum omnium subditorum; et unus confessarius qui sit ignarus aut moribus pravis potest totam regionem perditam facere. Non debet igitur episcopus aliquem probare quin prius certus fiat de ejus probitate et doctrina, examinando cum super morali. Nonnulli episcopi facultatem audiendi confessiones præbent indistincte omnibus concionatoribus quadragesimalibus et omnibus aliis qui in aliis diœcesibus jam approbati fuere. Sed alii episcopi scrupulum sibi faciunt de hoc; et merito, cum postea observentur tot mala quæ oriuntur ab hujusmodi confessariis cæco ductu approbatis. Si prælatus cupit habere confessarios quorum opera uti possit sine scrupulo, præter congregationes casuum moralium, quæ solent fieri in multis diœcesibus, curet statuendas in qualibet regione academias moralis bis aut ter in hebdomada, notum faciendo ab eo nullum admissum iri ad audiendas confessiones qui saltem per annum non interfuerit hujusmodi academiis, quæ maxime utiles, ne dicam necessariæ, sunt illi qui vult in hac scientia esse versatus, dum ita melius dubia disceptantur, et doctrinæ magis in memoria figuntur.

44.—Optimum consilium esset etiam si episcopus curaret in locis grandioribus suæ diœcesis congregationes particulares statui sacerdotum et clericorum magis vitæ spirituali addictorum, ubi se exercerent qualibet hebdomada in praxi audiendarum confessionum aut moribundis assistendi aut celebrandi missam, et aliquando se exercerent in aliqua oratiuncula (vulgo *sentimento*) facienda, colloquio, sermone aut instruc-

tione. Hi congregati vero habebunt suas peculiares regulas, v. gr. veste talari semper vestiendi, aleis non ludendi, &c., ut populus de eis venerationem concipiat. Nihil refert hos paucos esse, imo expedit multos non esse, ut cautiores et magis addictos in operibus charitatis se servent. Et episcopi diligentia erit semper eos ad id inflammare, ac etiam de eis benemereri, saltem dando eis conciones quadragesimales aut alias conciones, etiam mittendo eos ad aliquam missionem aut exercitia spiritualia facienda; hortando eos semper ut stylo simplici et populari concionentur, si cupiunt fructum ex concionibus afferre.

45.—Item, ut bene avertit Roncaglia cum Quarti et Pasqual., episcopus sub gravi tenetur invigilare ut sui sacerdotes missam celebrent debita attentione et gravitate a tanto sacrificio requisita, sine verborum et cæremoniarum conculcatione, ut impie cum communi scandalo sæcularium a nonnullis, ne dicam plerisque, sacerdotibus factitatur; quæ quidem conculcatio cum est notabilis, ut necessario evenit, certe est peccatum mortale, ut dicetur loquendo de Eucharistia, (tract. 15, num. 84,) ubi considerabitur ex proposito hoc punctum. Sed quod ad episcopos attinet, declaratum est in Trident., (sess, 22, decr. de observ. in celebr. miss.) eos teneri (et quia materia est gravis, certe gravis est obligatio) prohibere in suis diœcesibus quominus tali irreverentia missæ celebrentur: "Decernit s. synodus, sunt verba concilii, ut ordinarii locorum ea omnia prohibere sedulo curent ac teneantur quæ..... irreverentia (quæ ab impietate vix sejuncta esse potest) induxit."

46.—Maxima etiam esse debet cura episcoporum in non negligenda visitatione oppidorum, quam Tridentinum districte præcipit episcopis, (in sess. 25, c. 3, de ref.) ubi dicitur: "Episcopi propriam diœcesim per se ipsos aut, si legitime impediti fuerit, per suum generalem vicarium aut visitatorem, si quotannis totam, propter ejus latitudinem, visitare non poterunt, saltem majorem ejus partem, ita tamen ut tota biennio per se vel per visitatores suos compleatur, visitare non prætermittant." Et subjungitur: "Studeant quam celerrime, cum debita tamen diligentia, visita-

tionem persolvere." O quot perturbationibus occurritur a prælato, circumeundo et propriis oculis res inspiciendo! Impossibile est bene diœcesim gubernare per alios quam per proprium pastorem. S. Carolus Borromæus, licet bonis ministris provisus fuisset, non omittebat ipse personaliter adire et gravi incommodo visitare etiam regiones remotiores suæ diœcesis. Ipse, ut aliquoties adiret aliquod oppidum cum visitatione, reptans per lutulenta et nivosa loca iter fecit: et percurratur ejus vita, ut observetur quantum ille operatus sit et quantum suis visitationibus profecerit. De S. Francisco Salesio narratur etiam, ut aliqua loca visitaret, necesse sibi fuisse per semitas adeo difficiles et asperas progredi ut plantas pedum decorticatas haberet, adeo ut per plures dies pedibus insistere nequiret. Aliquando contigit ei super foliis .dormire; et se roganti ne vitam suam periculo exponeret, Sanctus respondebat: "Me vivere non est necesse; sed est necesse ut muneri meo satisfaciam."

47.—In istis autem visitationibus debet episcopus efficere ut suæ oves pastoris vocem audiant. O quam plus, quam aliorum, proprii pastoris vox movet! S. Carolus in visitatione solebat bis aut ter in die concionari. Item debet examinare pueros, ut videat quomodo instructi sint; et ita potest consulere parochorum negligentiæ, eos corripiendo et etiam substituendo aliquem œconomum ad docendos pueros doctrinam parochi impensis, saltem ad aliorum exemplum. Item incumbat, præsertim in oppidis, examinando sacerdotes in cæremoniis missæ, et suspendat a celebratione sine ulla misericordia eos qui, uti debet, iis non callent. Potest etiam episcopus ad examen revocare confessarios approbatos, et ex justa causa etiam parochos.—Vide tract. 16, n. 75. In primis debet scrutinium personale adhibere de omnibus sacerdotibus regionis, unumquemque secrete interrogando, primo de suis muneribus, ut ei insinuet quod oportebit, et deinde de aliorum defectibus et præsertim de parochi et confessariorum, v. g. quomodo suo muneri dent operam, cum quibus versentur, &c. Nonnulli episcopi vigilantes apud se habent libellum memorialem ubi qualitates bonas aut malas uniuscujusque eccle-

siastici adnotant. Hæc monumenta possunt inservire sexcentis rebus bonis et præcipue ut parochorum electionem, confessariorum aliorumque ministrorum sibi certam faciant. Et postremo interroget de abusibus, scandalis et discordiis quæ in regionibus serpunt. In istis visitationibus curet ad fervorem erigere congregationes sæcularium ac eas de auxiliis opportunis providere, assignando concionatorem ac confessarium, si istis carent. Et tunc potest etiam particulares congregationes sacerdotum missionariorum superius adnotatas instituere. Expediret etiam ut in istis visitationibus episcopus in confessionali sederet, sin ut confessiones exciperet, saltem ut auscultaret aliquam personam quæ illum in secreto alloqui vellet. Denique non prætermittat in visitatione, Confirmationis sacramentum administrare. Et compertum est apud omnes graviter peccare illum episcopum qui diutius differt hujus Sacramenti admistrationem, quia privat suas oves tanto bono. Quare dicunt Castrop., Salm., et Croix non excusari a mortali, si per 8 aut 10 annos saltem non circumit (et suis expensis, si consuetuodo aliud non ferret) regiones saltem principales diœcesis tale sacramentum administraturus; modo hoc sibi non esset moraliter impossibile.

48.—4. Episcopo curæ esse debent monasteria monialium. Quocirca 1. invigilare debet sedulo ut puellarum profiteri cupientium voluntatem exploret, quandoquidem major harum pars religionem ingrediuntur non Dei vocatione sed parentum impulsione; et hinc fit postea ut vitam ibi ducant inquietam, et introducant laxitates in communitatem cum damno communi. 2. Tempore visitationis, quæ quolibet anno fieri debet in monasteriis sibi subjectis, juxta clem. *Attendentes, de statu mon.* (circa autem visitationem monasteriorum exemptorum quod clausuram, vide Tract. 20. de Privileg., n. 82,) debet ille particulare scrutinium adhibere, secreto sigillatim moniales audire, ut cognoscat utrum in monasterio adsit aliquod scandalum aut morum dissolutio. Sit nihilominus cautus, ne partialis videatur alicui factionum quæ forsan vigent in monasterio. Audiat omnes, et postea de opportunis provisionibus prospiciat. 3.

Non sit facilis ad extraneis veniam colloquendi cum monialibus dandam. Suadeat sibi, affectiones multoties non in principio contrahi, sed temporis progressu et diuturna consuetudine; et unica animorum cum exteris adhæsio potest esse scandalo et ruinæ toti monasterio. Et si monasterium extra suam residentiam esset, episcopus admoneat vicarium cui hoc curæ est ut nimis sit parcus et circumspectus in dandis hujusmodi licentiis. 4. Curet pariter plurios in anno in dandis confessariis extraordinariis, saltem ut remedium afferatur confessionibus nullis aut sacrilegis quas nonnullæ moniales apud ordinarios faciunt: nec credat hos casus esse valde raros, nec in hoc attendat monialium postulationem, quia quæ magis indigent sunt magis difficiles ad requirendum extraordinarium. Et cum eum assignat, unamquamque obliget ad illum adeundum, si non ad confitendum, saltem ad colloquendum, uti statuit Benedict. XIV in sua bulla *Pastoralis curæ*, qui, explicans verba Tridentini, sess. 25, cap. 20: "Qui (confessarius extraordinarius) omnium confessiones audire debet," sic ait: "Extraordinario confessario singulæ se sistant ad sacramentalem confessionem apud ipsum peragendam sive ad salutaria monita accipienda.....; ne aliæ censerentur necessarias habuisse causas ob quas ad extrordinarii opem confugere coactæ essent, aliæ vero ab hujusmodi necessitatibus immunes judicarentur." Convenit etiam ut episcopus sine præcisa necessitate non inducatur ad confirmandos ultra triennum confessarios ordinarios. Postremo curet ut singulis annis dentur exercitia spiritualia ab aliquo sacerdote exempliari et perito communitatum disciplinæ: dico hoc, quia secus potest accidere quod potius damnum quam utile percipiatur.

49.—5. Episcopus, ut supra dictum est, tenetur ad residentiam, et strictius parocho; ille enim est illius gregis principalis pastor. Episcopo in ejus ordinatione consignatur annulus, ut, illum gerendo, consideret non esse amplius sui juris sed ecclesiæ suæ sponsæ, ut perpetuo dum vivit ei assistat. Conceditur tamen a concilio episcopis posse abesse tres menses ex causa a diœcesi: sed notetur quod Benedictus

XIV in bulla *Universæ*, declarans hanc causam (quæ a Trident. nominatur *æqua*), dicit eam non debere esse futilem nec ob vanum solatium : " Animi levitas, oblectationum cupiditas aliæque futiles causæ excluduntur," sunt verba pontificis. S. Carolus, cum extra suam diœcesim esse cogebatur, catenis, ut legitur in ejus vita, obstrictus esse videbatur ob vehemens desiderium in quo erat citius redeundi. Cardinalis Bellarminus, licet a papa coactus Romæ morari et extra ecclesiam suam Capuanam, sed ob bonum ecclesiæ universalis, sibi non videbatur ipse tutus in conscientia, ideoque se episcopatu abdicavit.

50.—6. Episcopus tenetur ad corripiendum et ad scandalis occurrendum strictius quam parochi ; tum quia ipse est principalis pastor, tum quia majore auctoritate sua potest malis consulere, invocando etiam, si opus est, auxilium principis sæcularis, uti fit a multis bonis episcopis, et quidem voti sui fiunt compotes. Hoc est illud grave onus quod episcopi etiam sancti mirum in modum formidant. Episcopus Neriti Sanfelix, fel. mem., dicebat : " Quomodo somnum capere possum cum scio aliquam ex ovibus meis Dei gratia carere ?" Verum est tale officium odio esse non paucis ; et episcopo, ut bene eo fungatur, conciliandæ sunt sibi maledictiones, aversiones et etiam vitæ pericula, " sed bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis." Dicebat idem episcopus Sanfelix : " Episcopum in acceptando episcopatu præparare se debere aut ad esse inquisitum aut venenatum aut damnatum." Ut recte occurratur scandalis, opus est ut episcopus attendat assidue ad inquirendum, et non tantum a parochis vel a vicariis foraneis, qui multoties, ob humanos respectus aut ne videantur negligentes, tacent ; sed etiam perquirat ab aliis sacerdotibus zelantibus, quos ubique locorum diœcesis ad id destinatos habeat, ut ab ipsis certior fiat de omni quod sciunt. Et cum ad se adeunt parochi et vicarii, curet statim coram se admittendos et cito expediendos, ut postea sint faciles ad redeundum, et ne excusationem afferant se non posse tamdiu exspectare.

51.—VII. Episcopus tenetur ad largiendas eleemosynas. Ecclesia reditibus episcopatum non instruit

ut suo libitu profundat Episcopus, sed ut pauperibus succurrat; patrimonium pauperum est mensa episcopalis. Sanctus Gregorius ait, eleemosynam esse primum opus misericordiæ, quod pastor suo gregi præstare debet. O quot malis potest Episcopus eleemosynis prospicere! Quot sponsi vivunt in peccato, quia eis non suppetit modus matrimonium perficiendi! Quot pueri ob paupertatem dormiunt una cum parentibus, aut mares cum puellis in eodem lecto cum tanta animarum pernicie! Ideoque boni Episcopi curant perquirere a parochis de necessitatibus, quæ adsuut, et eis imponunt ut se certiorem faciant, quoties aliquod occurrit. Scio equidem doctores (Lib. 3. n. 491. Quær. IV.) dicere, posse beneficiatum servare fructus superfluos suæ sustentationi (intelligitur semper ac pauperes in gravi necessitate constituti non sunt) ut eos impendat in emendis reditibus pro Ecclesia, aut ut in posterum aliis majoribus necessitatibus provideat: scio etiam Episcopos sanctos non legare nummos, aut prædia empta, sed æs alienum. Dedecet Episcopum, dicebat S. Carolus, ut fama audiatur, quod ipse nummos in arca retineat. Et sanctus Thom. de Villanova dicebat quod si moriendo nummos reliquisset se pro damnato habiturus esset.

52.—Omitto denique sermonem facere de aliis Episcopi muneribus, v. g. de Missa quam ipse, etiam plus quam parochus, tenetur in festis pro suis ovibus applicare. De accessu quem ad se patentem assidue tenere debet subditis, etc. et præcipue parochis, et vicariis foraneis, quos statim ad sui præsentiam admittere tenetur; nec non rationem exquirere a vicario capitulari de omnibus quæ fecit, ut præcipit Trident. Sess, 24. c. 16, *de refor.* Sed omitere non possum, quin aliquid dicam de bono exemplo, quod ipse cunctis exhibere debet. Si pastor cupit, ut oves ad montem ascendant, opus est ut præeat ipse. Episcopus est illa lucerna a Deo super candelabro posita, ut luceat omnibus, qui sunt in domo Domini. Igitur oportet, ut dixit S. Paulus Tito, Prælatum omnium virtutum, quas in suo grege videre cupit, se exemplum ostendere. Sit exemplo *mansuetudinis;* beneficia cum potest ingratis et inimicis, a quibus

vexatur, rependendo. Perspicua exempla habemus, quæ nobis reliquerunt S. Carolus, S. Franciscus Salesius, et nuperrime Emilius Cavaliere Episcopus Trojæ, de quo erat proverbium: "Qui ab Episcopo Cavaliere vult beneficiis affici, oportet ut de ipso male mereatur." Sit exemplo *paupertatis;* verum est quod Episcopus quin justitiam lædat, potest impendere quantum suam decentem sustentationem decet, sed in cunctis deberet efficere ut sancta paupertas splendeat. Paupertas in habenda familia moderata; tot tantum sibi famulentur, quot suæ mere necessitati satisfacere sufficiant. Paupertas in vestitu, et in modesta ac simplici domus supellectili; Episcopus enim, qui palatium sumptuoso supellectili, qua laici oblectantur, ornatum habet, non utique ædificationem præ se fert populo. Sanctus Carolus e domo sua omnia aulæa tapetia, paramenta, et curiosas imagines penitus dimovit. Paupertas in mensa frugali, et pro comperto habeatur, quod nihil aliud poterit magis Ecclesiastici apud vulgus existimationem conciliare, quam frugalitas in victu: "Vivere autem de altari, non lucrari concessum est."—Can. 1. Dist. 44. Et Trident. jubet, "Quod modesta supellectili, et mensa, ac frugali victu contenti sint."—Sess. 25. c. 1. de ref. Ita pariter exemplo sit *orationis:* Cardinalis de Aretio consulto descendebat in ecclesiam oraturus ante SS. Sacramentum, ut alios exemplo suo moveret. *Mortificationis;* abstinendo a quibusdam solatiis Prælatum non decentibus. *Solitudinis;* ad secularium consuetudines nisi ex necessitate non accedendo. *Modestiæ;* mulierum commercia aufugiendo, et cum necesse sit, maxima cautela cum eis agendo. *Zelo;* operam dando, ut in omni privato sermone de Deo eloquia immisceat, uti S. Carolo moris erat, dum sibi cum quibuscumque agendum erat.

53.—Dixi, loquendo de parochis, a bonis parochis pendere subditorum salutem. Nunc dico a bonis Episcopis pendere salutem totius diœcesis; nam Episcopus promovet bonos clericos, bonos sacerdotes, eligit bonos confessarios, et bonos parochos: suo bono exemplo, et vigilantia multum confert, ut in probitate sua illi perseverent, et ita universe in

diœcesi pietas vigere videtur. Propterea in hac materia de pastorum debito fusius egi, quam in aliis, quia in hac agitur de bono, vel damno communi, quod omne in pastorum bono, vel malo ductu positum est.

PRACTICAL METHOD

OF

ATTENDING THE DYING.

By St. Alphonsus Liguori.

1. To assist the dying to die well is a work of charity most pleasing to God, and most conducive to the salvation of souls: because at the hour of death (on which the salvation of each person depends,) the assaults of hell are most terrible, and the sick are least able to assist themselves. To show how pleasing to him it is to assist the dying, the Lord several times showed to St. Philip Neri, angels suggesting words to the religious who ministered to the sick.

2. The Roman Ritual says that one of the principal duties of a parish priest is to assist the dying: hence it tells him that as soon as he learns that one of his parishioners is sick, he should visit him without waiting to be sent for, and that he should visit him frequently if the sick man be sick in soul as well as in body. And should he be unable to go in person, he ought to send another priest: but he must be a pious and prudent priest. For, in attending the sick some priests do more injury than service to the dying, and to their own souls. The Ritual observes that when a priest cannot be had, the pastor should endeavour to get some pious and prudent layman to suggest pious sentiments to the dying.

SECTION I.

Admonitions to the assisting Priest.

3. The parish priest should endeavour to ascertain secretly from the physician, whether the disease is

mortal. I say secretly; for a detestable practice exists among physicians of holding out hopes of recovery to the sick, through fear of displeasing them, or their relatives, as if to announce to a sick man the obligation of making his confession (which as soon as they perceive that he is in danger of death, they ought to intimate to him,) were the same as to announce his death.

4. Secondly, the priest should endeavour to ascertain from the friends and relatives of the dying man, and also from himself, his natural dispositions, and defects: and particularly whether he has to restore the goods or character of others, whether he has entertained hatred to any one, and whether he has kept up a criminal friendship, in order to apply a remedy to all his spiritual maladies. But without necessity the priest should not remind the sick man of the persons for whom he has entertained a hatred, or inordinate affection. With regard to those who have been wounded, the priest must be careful, after having induced them to forgive the person who inflicted the wound, not to ask about the cause, or occasion, or author of it: should they speak on the subject, he must endeavour to change the topic. He should also take care not to speak to the sick without urgent necessity, on worldly goods, on lawsuits, children, or any other irrelevant matter.

5. Thirdly, after he has ascertained that the disease is dangerous, he should not speak to the sick man about confession in the beginning, but should first ask him about his sickness and sufferings. Let him then exhort him to resign himself to the divine will, and to unite his pains with the pains of Jesus dying on the cross, and offer them in atonement for his sins. The priest should then by degrees dispose the sick man for confession, by asking him how long it is since he was last at confession. He must then encourage him to hope that God will deliver him from his infirmity: but let him at the same time prudently give him to understand that the disease is dangerous: he may observe to the sick man that too much credit is not to be given to physicians, or relatives who hold

out hopes of recovery through fear of disturbing him. Let him then say that it will be conducive even to his bodily health (if expedient for the salvation of his soul,) to make a good confession while he has the use of his mental faculties. Belluacensis relates that after making his confession, a certain dying man rose from his bed in perfect health; and Thomas Cantipratensis states that a certain gentleman, after all remedies had failed, confessed his sins and recovered.

6. Should the sick man ask to put off his confession, it is better to accede to his request, provided there is not imminent danger of death, or of lethargy, or of delirium. But the priest should fix the time for the confession: for example, the evening, or following morning. But if the danger be imminent, let him say with St. Augustine, to the dying man, that God has promised pardon to penitent sinners, but that he has not promised them to-morrow. Crastinum non promisit, fortasse dabit, fortasse non dabit. Should the sick man obstinately refuse to make his confession, the priest should not desert him, but should from time to time exhort him to repentance, proposing at one time motives of terror, at another, motives of confidence: he should also procure for him the aid of public and private prayers.

7. Fourthly, if the disease be far advanced, the priest should also exhort the sick man to adjust his temporal affairs, when this is necessary for the peace of the family, and still more when it is necessary for the tranquillity of his own conscience; but the priest must take particular care not to expose himself to the danger of being charged with self-interested motives. If the dying man has sisters or brothers in grievous need, it is right to admonish him that he is bound under pain of mortal sin, to leave them at least, as much of his property as is necessary to relieve their wants. But, it does not appear that a person is bound by so strict an obligation towards relatives who are more remote. (See my Moral Theology, lib. 3. n. 946.) If the sick man wishes to leave any thing for the benefit of his own soul, the priest should

exhort him not to entrust the payment of it to his heirs, (for experience shows that few pious legacies are paid,) but rather to leave a certain sum for masses, or for some other pious work. Let the priest take care not to give any counsel to the sick man, which may be prejudicial to others: for it does not become the ministers of Jesus Christ to draw upon themselves the hatred of others.

8. Fifthly, in the acts which he proposes to the illiterate, the priest should always speak in the vulgar tongue: but in speaking to educated persons he may occasionally use latin passages, taken from the Scriptures, but they should be short and calculated to excite compunction. The Ritual remarks that the priest should not molest the dying, as some do, who by exclamations, and by speaking too much, annoy the sick and add to the pain of the head with which they are afflicted. Father Recupito, of the Society of Jesus, relates of himself, that being once at the point of death, he understood nothing of what was said to him, but only heard a noise which tormented him so, that he was obliged to ask for a little repose.

9. Sixthly, besides the little images of Jesus crucified, and of most holy Mary, which he will have kept near the bed, the priest should also (if they can be had,) have placed before the sick man, a large image of the Redeemer, and of the Blessed Virgin, that they may be always in his view, and that he frequently recommend himself to Jesus and Mary.

10. Seventhly, the priest should remove from the room of the sick man, all dangerous objects; such as arms, improper images, and above all, persons who might be an occasion of sin to him: these should be not only removed but banished from the house. And when the dying man is near his agony, the priest should endeavour to remove from his chamber all persons whose assistance is not absolutely necessary. He should exclude from the room all relatives, lest their presence should excite any passion in the sick man.

SECTION II.

Remedies against temptations.

11. The general remedies against all temptations are frequently to invoke the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, and frequently to make on oneself the sign of the cross; but for some particular temptations, it will be useful to give some particular remedies.

12. First, with regard to the temptations against *faith*. This temptation (which is the most terrible of all,) generally assails those particularly, who have led a dissolute life; and especially men of learning who are addicted to their own opinion. They must be told that, if the devil suggests any doubt or proposes any subtle objection, they should not argue with him, but answer in general terms by saying: *I believe what the holy Church believes, which believes the truth*, that they should thank God for having made them be born in the bosom of the holy Church, and should protest that in the Catholic faith they wish to live and die. The best means of banishing such temptations is to turn the mind to other acts, such as acts of contrition, of confidence, of the love of God, and the like. Bellarmine relates that a certain learned man, in consequence of beginning at death to dispute with the devil on a point of faith, was defeated by his adversary, and was lost.

13. But should the temptation continue to molest him, he ought to say that the proofs of our faith (so just and holy in itself, propagated by a few fishermen, in spite of so many persecutions, and confirmed by so many miracles, and by so many millions of martyrs, who have given their lives for it,) are so clear, that they make its truth evident, though they do not render clear the mysteries which it teaches. Were the mysteries which faith teaches evident to us, where would be the merit of faith, which is faith because it is obscure? "Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt."—Joan., xx. 29.

14. Secondly, the temptation to despair is one of

the principal temptations with which hell most fiercely combats the dying. Hence it is seldom expedient to speak to them of the divine justice, of the pains of the damned, or of the grievousness of their sins; the priest should rather suggest to them sentiments of confidence in the mercy of God, in the passion of Jesus Christ, in the divine promises, and in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints.

15. The first motive, then, of our hope, is the divine mercy; for God is called *the Father of mercies.*—2 Cor., i. 3. He goes to meet even those who do not seek him. "Invenerunt qui non quæsierunt me."—Isa., lxv. 1. He desires our salvation more ardently than we ourselves desire it. Hence, as St. Bernard says, he complains that he is abandoned even by those whom he seeks to embrace: "Amplecti quærit a quibus desertum esse queritur." All his inclinations lead him to pardon our offences: "Multus est ad ignoscendum." He protests that he wishes not the death of a sinner: "Nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur.....et vivat." He declares that when a sinner repents he forgets all his sins: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins.....I will not remember all his iniquities."—Ezech., xviii. 21. After these protestations, who can ever diffide in the divine mercy? A single act of sorrow is sufficient to obtain for us the pardon of an infinite number of sins. By merely saying, *be merciful to me a sinner*, the publican was justified. As soon as he cast himself at his father's feet, the prodigal son was embraced by him. The instant David said, *I have sinned*, the prophet said to him: *the Lord also hath taken away thy sin.*—2 Kings, xii. 13.

16. The second motive to confidence is the passion of Jesus Christ, who has declared that he came to save sinners: "I am not come to call the just but sinners."—Mat., ix. 13. He protests that he will not reject any one who casts himself at his feet: "Them that come to me I will not cast out."—Joan, vi. 37. He says that he goes in search of the lost sheep (Mat., xviii. 12), and that when he finds one of

them he rejoices, he embraces it, and places it on his shoulders. He appears to treat penitent sinners with special tenderness, as we learn from the life of St. Mary of Egypt, of Blessed Angela of Foligno, of St. Margaret of Cortona, and of many other sinful souls. He, then, who has a good will, ought not to be afraid of that Lord who, in order not to condemn us, has condemned himself to die on a cross.

17. The divine promises are the third motive to confidence. In several passages of the Gospel the divine grace is promised to all who ask it: "Ask and you shall receive."—John, xvi. 24. "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you."—John, xvi. 23. This promise has been made to all, whether saints or sinners. "Every one that asketh receiveth."—Mat., vii. 8. In order, then, to obtain the graces necessary for eternal life, it is enough to ask them: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him."—Lam., iii. 25.

18. The fourth motive is the intercession of the saints, and particularly of the divine Mother, whom God wishes that we, with the holy Church, salute as our refuge, our life, and our hope; saying, *Refuge of sinners, pray for us; our life, our hope, hail!* Hence she is justly called the hope of them that are in despair: *Spes desperantium*, Blosius; the hope of the abandoned: *Adjutrix destitutorum*, St. Ephrem. Mary herself revealed to St. Bridget, that as a mother seeing her child surrounded by enemies, courageously defends him against their attacks, so she defends against the assaults of the devil the souls that recommend themselves to her protection. She also said to the same saint, that when a sinner invokes her aid, she attends not to the grievousness of his sins, but to the intention with which he comes. And God himself revealed to St. Catherine of Sienna, that he had given to Mary this privilege, that when a sinner has recourse to her, he cannot be carried away by the devil.

19. Remedies against temptations to *vain-glory*. St. Bernard says that vain-glory is a dart which *leviter penetrat, sed non leviter vulnerat*. It is particu-

larly dangerous to persons who have performed many good works. Hence should the priest see that the dying man is too secure of his salvation, that he trusts in the works which he has performed, he ought to say to him that our sins only are ours; that all our good comes from God. "*What hast thou that thou has not received?*" The priest may add, that no one is infallibly certain of being in the state of grace: "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred."—Eccl., ix. 1. And that therefore every one should tremble, and should endeavour to work out his salvation with fear and trembling: "Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini."—Phil., ii. 12.

20. Against temptations to *impatience.* To them who are impatient under the pains of sickness, the priest should represent the great sufferings of the martyrs, some of whom have been skinned alive, cut in pieces, or burned to death on a slow fire. Above all, let him place before them all the torments of the innocent Jesus, who has, for the love of us, suffered more than all the martyrs. He may say to the dying man, that the pains of sickness cannot be avoided, and that if he yields to impatience under them, he will add to his sufferings here, and to his chastisement hereafter: but that if, on the other hand, he accepts them for God's sake, he will lessen his pains in this life, and in purgatory, and will be rewarded for his patience in paradise. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—John, xvi. 20. The pains of the last illness complete our eternal crown; for, as St. Bonaventure says, to suffer pain with patience, is more perfect than all other good works. "Patience hath a perfect work."—James, i. 4. It is thus that God treats his greatest friends in this life; for the cross is the most secure mark of predestination. St. Clare was afflicted with the severest pains for twenty-eight years. St. Liduvina was for thirty-eight years a constant martyr to sickness. The Blessed Virgin said once to St. Bridget: "Do you know why your sickness is so much prolonged? It is because my Son and I love you." "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for

us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor., iv. 17. "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."—Rom. viii. 28.

21. Hence it is necessary to exhort the sick to be resigned in all things to the divine will, and in order to conform to it, to submit patiently not only to the pains of sickness, but also to the mistakes of the physician, and the negligence of the attendants. And the priest should be particularly careful to exhort the sick man to pray to God for holy patience.

22. Fifthly, to the young who feel a difficulty in accepting a premature death, the priest should represent the miseries of the present life, the maladies, rancours, and, above all, the dangers of sin and perdition, to which men are exposed in this world. Hence the saints have so ardently desired death. St. Teresa used to say: "In every moment of my life, I may lose God." Hence when she heard the clock strike, she was filled with consolation, because she knew that another hour of danger was over. The holy martyrs went with joy to death, through the desire of being delivered from the fear and dangers of perdition, and of going to enjoy God. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.....that they may rest from their labours."—Apoc., xiv. 13. In this world we are but in passage. "We have not here a lasting city."—Heb., xiii. 14. Every one, whether a king or a pope, must die.

23. Let the priest exhort the sick man to thank God for not having taken him out of life when he was in sin, and for granting him the grace to die with the benefit of the holy sacraments, and with so many hopes of eternal salvation. In this life we always offend God, at least by light faults; hence in order to be freed from such defects, we ought to accept and even to desire death. We should resign ourselves to the will of God, who wishes what is best for us. *Who knows, my brother*, (the priest should say,) *that if you recover you will not lose your soul?* The sick man will say: *I would wish to live a little longer, in order to do penance for my sins, and to do something*

for God: hitherto I have done nothing for him. The priest may answer that no penance is more pleasing to God than to accept death with cheerfulness in atonement for our sins, and that there is no act more perfect, and more pleasing to God than to accept death in order to do his will.

24. Remedies against *attachment to worldly goods, and to relatives.* To them who are unwilling to die, because they are attached to worldly goods, the priest may say that these are not true goods, that they are transitory goods, which will soon pass away, and which when possessed give pain rather than content. The true goods which fully content the soul, and never fail, are the goods which God prepares for us in heaven.

25. Should the sick man be afflicted at the thought of leaving his wife or children, or any person for whom he entertains an affection, let the priest say to him: *My brother, we must all die; attend now to the salvation of your soul, and you will pray for them in heaven; and will also be happy along with them for all eternity. What can be more delightful than to go to remain with God, with Jesus Christ, with your mother, Mary, and with all the saints of paradise?*

26. Should the sick man be afflicted at leaving his family in poverty, the priest may say to him: *If you save your soul, as I hope you will, you will be better able to assist your family in heaven than you would in this life. Doubt not but that God who feeds the birds of the air, will not neglect to provide for your relatives: if you love them, God loves them still more.*

27. Remedies against temptations to *hatred or revenge.* With regard to those who are tempted to hatred on account of an insult which they have received, it is necessary to remind them, first, of the divine precept: *love your enemies.* Secondly, that he who does not pardon others, cannot hope for pardon from God, who says: "Without are dogs."—Apoc., xxii. 15. Dogs the symbol of the vindictive, are cast out of heaven. But on the other hand, God promises certain pardon to them who pardon others: "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."—Luke, vi. 37.

Thirdly, the priest must say to them: *If your enemies have injured you, how much more have you injured God? If, then, you expect pardon from God, how much more ought you pardon your neighbours?* "Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also."—Col., iii. 13. Lastly, the priest should show the sick man, how much the person who forgives an injury pleases God. St. John Gualbertus, after having pardoned the murderer of his brother, saw the image of Jesus crucified, bowing its head as if to thank him. St. Stephen prayed for those who stoned him to death. St. James before death embraced his accuser. St. Lewis of France brought to his table the man who had made an attempt on his life. St. Ambrose supported for a long time an assasin who lay in wait to kill him. But above all, Jesus Christ who prayed on the cross for his crucifiers, gave the first example of the pardon of injuries.

SECTION III.

Motives and affections to be suggested to the Dying.

28. First, motives to confidence. These have been already explained; but to what has been already said on them, the following passages of the Holy Scripture may be added. "No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded."—Eccl. ii. 11. No one has placed his hope in God and has been abandoned by him. "He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 John ii. 2. Jesus Christ has died in order to obtain pardon for us. "He hath delivered him up for us all; how hath he not also with him given us all things."—Rom. viii. 32. How shall that God who has given us his Son, refuse us pardon?

I.—*Affections of confidence.*

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"—Ps. xxvi. 1. "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth."—Ps. xxx.

"We therefore beseech thee, assist thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy blood."

"In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, may I not be confounded for ever."

"O Good Jesus, hide me within thy wounds." "Thy wounds are my merits."—St. Bernard.

My Jesus, you will not refuse me the pardon of my sins, since you have not refused me your blood.

Passion of Jesus, you are my hope.

Merits of Jesus, you are my hope.

Wounds of Jesus, you are my hope.

"The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever."

Mary, my mother, you have to obtain salvation for me; have pity on me.

Hail, holy Queen, our sweetness and our hope, hail.

Holy Mary, pray for me, a sinner.

Refuge of sinners, pray for me.

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God.

Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

II.—*Affections of contrition.*

St. Augustine says that every Christian should continue till death to bewail his sins.

"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord."—Ps. cxlii. 2.

My Jesus and my Judge, pardon me before you judge me.

"An humble and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise."

Oh! my God, that I had never offended you! You did not deserve to be treated as I have treated you.

I am sorry with my whole heart, and, above all things for having offended you.

Father, I am not worthy to be called your Son. I have turned my back upon you; I have despised your grace; I have voluntarily lost you. Pardon me for the love, and for the blood of Jesus Christ: I repent with my whole heart.

Accursed sins, that have deprived me of God, I detest you, I abhor you, I curse you.

My God, what evil have you done me that I should have so grievously offended you? For the love of Jesus, have pity on me.

Never more, O Lord, will I offend you. I wish, O my God, to love you during the remainder of my life, whether it be long or short.

In satisfaction for the offences which I have offered to you, I offer you my death, and the pains which I shall suffer till death.

Lord, you have reason to chastise me: I have sinned grievously against you, but I entreat you to chastise me here and not hereafter.

O Mary, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, pardon, and perseverance.

III.—*Affections of love.*

My God, because you are infinite goodness and worthy of infinite love, I love you above all things; I love you more than myself; I love you with my whole heart.

My God, I do not deserve to love you, because I have offended you; but for the love of Jesus Christ, make me love you.

I would wish to see you loved by all men.

I rejoice in your infinite happiness.

My Jesus, I wish to suffer and to die for you who have suffered so much, and have died for me.

Chastise me, O Lord, as you wish, but do not deprive me of the power of loving you.

My God, save me; my salvation consists in loving you.

I desire paradise, in order to love you for eternity, and with all my strength.

My God, do not send me to hell, as I deserve: there I should have to hate you, but I cannot bear to hate you. What evil have you done me, O Lord, that I should have to hate you? Make me love you, and then send me where you please.

I wish to suffer as much as you please: I wish to die in order to please you.

Bind me, O Jesus, to you: do not permit me to be ever separated from you.

O my God, make me all yours before I die.

When shall I be able to say, my God, I can never lose you?

O God, I would wish to love you as much as you deserve.

O Mary, obtain for me the grace to belong entirely to God.

My mother, I love you ardently. I wish to go to love you for ever in paradise.

IV.—*Motives to resignation.*

All our good and our life consists in conformity to the will of God. "Life in his *good* will."—Ps. xxix. 6. God wishes what is most conducive to our welfare. Jesus Christ appeared to St. Gertrude, and offered her life or death. She answered, *I wish, O Lord, what you wish.* The Redeemer also appeared to St. Catherine of Sienna, with a crown of Jewels, and a crown of thorns, that she might choose between them. Her answer was, *I make choice of that which you wish me to choose.*

Affections.

O brother N., if God calls you to another life, are you not content? Yes, Father. Say then, continually: Lord, here I am; do with me what you please. Your will be always done: I wish only what you wish. I wish to suffer as much as you please; I wish to die when you please.

In your hands I place my soul and body, my life and death. *I will bless the Lord at all times.* Whether you console or afflict me, I love you, O my Lord, and I wish to love you always.

O eternal Father, I unite my death with the death of Jesus Christ; and, in union with his death, I offer it to you.

O will of God, you are my love.

O pleasure of my God, to you I sacrifice my whole being.

V.—*Motives to desire paradise.*

Blosius relates (Mon. Spir. c. 13) several revelations in which it is said that some souls in purgatory suffer a particular pain (called the pain of *desire* or of *languor,)* in punishment of the tepidity with which they desired heaven. This life is a prison, in which we cannot see God. Hence David prayed, "Bring my soul out of prison."—Ps. clxi. 8; and St. Augustine exclaimed: "Oh! Lord, may I die in order to see you." St. Jerome called death his sister, and said—*My sister, open to me.* Yes; for it is death that opens paradise. Hence St. Charles Borromeo, seeing death painted with a knife in the hand, ordered the painter to cancel the knife, and to substitute for it a key of gold—as the key of heaven.

It will be useful, then, to speak frequently to the dying on the goods of paradise; repeating the words of St. Paul—"Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor., ii. 9.

Affections.

"When shall I come and appear before the face of God."—Ps. xli. 3. When, O my God, shall I see your infinite beauty, and love you face to face? I will love you always in heaven—you will always love me: we shall then love each other for eternity—O my God, my love, my all. O my Jesus, when shall I kiss the wounds which you suffered for my sake? O Mary, when shall I see myself at the feet of that mother who has loved me so tenderly, and assisted me so frequently?

"Turn, then, O most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and, after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb—Jesus."

VI.—*Affections to be suggested to the dying Christian when the crucifix is given him that he may kiss it.*

My Jesus, look not on my sins, but on what you have suffered for me.

Remember that I am one of the sheep for which you have died.

I am willing, O my Jesus, to be consumed for the love of you, who have been consumed for the love of me.

You have given yourself entirely to me; I give myself entirely to you.

O Lord, you an innocent have suffered for me, more than I, a sinner, suffer.

My brother, kiss these feet which have been wearied in seeking after you, in order to save you. Say: my dear Redeemer, I embrace your feet, as Magdalene did; make me feel that you have pardoned me.

My God, for the love of Jesus Christ, pardon me; and grant me a happy death.

Eternal Father, you have given me your Son, I give myself to you.

My Jesus, I have repaid you with ingratitude, have mercy on me I have deserved hell so often; chastise me here, and not hereafter.

You did not abandon me when I forsook you: do not abandon me now that I seek you.

Most sweet Jesus, do not permit me to be separated from you.

"Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?"

O Lord Jesus Christ, through the agony which your most noble soul suffered when it went forth from your most blessed body, have mercy on my sinful soul when it shall depart from my body. Amen.

My Jesus, you have died for the love of me, I wish to die for the love of you.

VII.—*Affections to be suggested to religious and priests at death.*

"In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest."

My God and my all. Oh! happy me, if I lose all things to gain you, O my sovereign Good.

"Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

"Cast me not away from thy face."

Most sweet Jesus, do not permit me to be separated from you.

May I die for the love of you, who died for the love of me.

"A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

"In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, may I not be confounded for ever."

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

Ah! Lord, may I die in order to see you.

What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire on earth?

Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

Father, I have sinned; I am not worthy to be called thy child.

Turn away thy face from my sins.

I am thine: save me.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Give me your love along with your grace, and I am sufficiently rich.

My beloved to me, and I to him.

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Hail, holy Queen, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

Refuge of sinners, pray for us.

Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, defend us against the enemy, and receive us at the hour of death.

O salvation of them who invoke thee.

VIII.—*Affections to be suggested during the last agony.*

O my God, I believe in you, the infallible Truth.

I hope in you, O infinite Mercy; I love you, O infinite Goodness. What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire on earth?

Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.

May I die for the love of you, who died for the love of me.

In peace, in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest.

My God, do not suffer me to be lost.

I wish for nothing but you, O infinite Goodness: I love you, I love you, I love you.

[Let it be here observed, that for persons in their agony, the acts to be most frequently suggested are acts of love and of contrition.]

My Jesus, in a few moments you shall be my judge, pardon me; I love you, and because I love you I am sorry for having offended you.

Most sweet Jesus, do not permit me to be separated from you.

Blood of Jesus, wash me. Passion of Jesus, save me.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

May I die, O Lord, in order to see you.

Mary, my Mother, pray to Jesus for me.

Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb —Jesus.

O Mary, now is the time to help thy servant.

My Mother, do not abandon me.

Land of beauty, land of love, when shall I see you?

O my God, when shall I love you face to face?

O my Jesus, when shall I see you, secure of never being able to lose you?

My God and my all.

I am willing to lose all things in order to gain you, O my God.

O my God, for the love of Jesus, have mercy on me.

O Lord, send me to purgatory as long as you wish, but do not condemn me to hell, where I could never love you.

"We therefore beseech thee, O Lord, assist thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood."

O eternal God, I wish and hope to love you for eternity.

My Love is crucified. My Jesus and my love has died for me.

Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord make haste to help me.

Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, give me your grace.

I love you, I repent, &c.

How can I thank you, O my God, for all the graces you have bestowed upon me? I hope to go to heaven to thank you for eternity.

Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, defend us against the enemy, and receive us at the hour of our death.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, &c.

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

SECTION IV.

Admonitions regarding the last sacraments, and on the mode of administering them with fruit to the dying.

I.—*On the Confession.*

In my moral theology, (lib. 6, n. 89,) I have taught that when there is proximate danger of death, and the confession is long, there is not an obligation of making it entire. Let it be here observed, first, that at death every priest, as the Council of Trent has declared (sess. 14, cap. 7), can absolve from all reserved sins and censures; and not only in the article of death, but also when there is danger of death, as I have proved, lib. 6, n. 561. But when the sick man has incurred a reserved censure, the priest should impose on him an obligation of presenting himself to his superior, should he recover; otherwise he will fall back into the censures.—n. 563.

Secondly, a simple priest cannot absolve in the presence of an approved confessor, unless he has commenced the confession before the arrival of the approved confessor: "aut nisi approbatus sit complex personæ infirmæ in peccato turpi, uti decrevit Summus Pontifex Benedictus XIV, 1. c. n. 553.

Thirdly, a dying man deprived of his senses, may be absolved at least conditionally, (which appears to be always safest,) when there is any one to attest that he had manifested a desire of absolution, by giving signs of repentance, or that he had asked for a confessor.—Lib. 6, n. 471. The dying may be absolved conditionally, even when deprived of their senses in the act of sin, as may be proved by the authority of St. Augustine, and by reason; for on the one hand, the condition takes away the danger of irreverence to the sacrament, and on the other, it is presumed that at the moment of death, every one wishes to provide for his eternal salvation, and that he gives some external sign of his desire, though, on account of his illness, it is not perceived.

Fourthly, if the sick man, after the third day, though warned of his danger, should refuse to make his confession, the priest would do well (when it can be prudently done,) to admonish the physician that by the Bull of St. Pius V., he is obliged to discontinue his visits. But should the sick man still continue obstinate, the physician may return to him.—Lib. 6, n. 664.

II.—*On the Communion.*

On the communion, the following admonitions are to be attended to. First, in order to administer the viaticum, it is not necessary to wait until there is no hope of recovery; it may be received whenever there is danger of death.—Lib. 5, n. 284. Secondly, when there is proximate danger of vomiting, it is not lawful to give the viaticum, even though the sick man had received and retained an unconsecrated particle.—n. 282. Thirdly, the viaticum may be given to children who have the use of reason; it may also be given

to persons labouring under madness, when it is known that they have led a holy life, or that they have been at confession a short time before, provided there is not danger of irreverence to the holy sacrament. Hence with such persons it is probable that it is lawful to try, whether there is danger of irreverence, by giving them an unconsecrated particle.—Loc. cit. Fourthly, it may and ought to be given to the dying on Good Friday, as appears from a decree of the Congregation of Rites.—19th Feb., 1622.

Fifthly, it is the common opinion of theologians, that the viaticum may be given several times in the same sickness, at least every six or eight days. Many hold that it may be given more frequently.—n. 284, 285. If the dying man had communicated in the morning, through devotion, he cannot receive the viaticum on the same day, unless the danger of death proceeded from some sudden illness, caused by a wound, by poison, or by a fall, &c.—n. 285, dub. 3.

Sixthly, when the sick man has only made his confession, and the disease continues to be dangerous, the priest should prepare him to receive the viaticum as soon as possible, that he may receive it with more perfect use of his understanding, and with greater fruit. Hence the priest should endeavour to excite in the sick man a desire of receiving the holy viaticum, in order to fortify himself against hell in the dangers to which he is exposed; and to unite himself to Jesus Christ, who wishes to come to him in order to enrich him with treasures of grace, and to accompany him to heaven if the time of his death has arrived, or if expedient for him, to restore his health. St. Cyril of Alexandria says that the holy Eucharist.—"Etiam depellit morbos, et ægrotos sanat. And St. Gregory Nazianzen relates, that his father, as soon as he received the communion, was restored to health.

Hence the priest may thus address the sick man: *My brother, your illness is not desperate, but it is dangerous, and therefore you would do well to receive, as soon as possible, the holy communion: for Jesus Christ will restore your bodily health, if it is conducive to your eternal salvation: and if you are to die, he will come*

to give you strength against the temptations of the devils, and to accompany you to paradise. What do you say? Do you desire to receive him! Yes: Prepare then to embrace your Redeemer, who has died for the love of you. Say to him with love: come, my Jesus, come my love, my only good, come to my soul, which desires to receive you. "Quid mihi est in cœlo, et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus et in æternum."

When he is going to administer the viaticum, the priest should exclude from the room of the sick man, his wife, daughters, sisters, and other relatives, whose presence might disturb him. The priest may say: *St. Philip Neri, as soon as he saw the most holy sacrament brought into his room said, "behold my love." This my brother, I wish you also to say. Behold the Son of God, who, for the love of you has descended from heaven on earth, and has voluntarily died for your sake; and now comes to visit you. Rejoice, for he has already pardoned you. Of the offences you committed, you have already repented, and you continue to be sorry for them. You now love God with your whole heart: do you not? Say, then: yes, my Jesus, I love you; and because I love you, I am sorry for having offended you: for the love of you I accept death; behold I offer myself to you: I even desire to die, if such be your pleasure, that I may go to see and love you for ever in paradise.*

The priest will then say to him: *Brother N., since you love Jesus Christ, you pardon for his sake, all those who have offended you: do you not? and you also ask pardon of all for the offences you have offered them. Turn to Jesus Christ, who now wishes to embrace you: say to him with your whole heart: "Domine non sum dignus." But notwithstanding your unworthiness, he wishes to come to you. Invite him, then, saying: My Jesus, my love, my all, I wish for nothing but you.*

After the sick man has communicated, the priest will do well to assist him to make his thanksgiving. Brother, the priest will say, *thank Jesus Christ, who has so lovingly come to embrace you. The most Holy Sacrament is called the pledge of paradise: "futuræ gloriæ pignus." Rejoice—God wishes to give you hea-*

ven, and therefore, he has given you himself as a pledge of future glory. Say with me.

My Lord, my love, I embrace you, I thank you, I love you, and I hope to love you for eternity: I am sorry for having offended you, and I purpose to spend all the remaining moments of my life, be they few or many, in loving you.

My Jesus, I offer you my life, if you wish to deprive me of it. Your will be always done. Give me, I pray you, only holy perseverance, and your love, that I may die loving you, and that I may go to love you for ever in heaven. You will not abandon me, I will never abandon you: we will then love each other, for ever, O God of my soul.

III.—*On the Extreme Unction.*

As the extreme unction is the last sacrament, so it is the crown and completion of the spiritual life. By it man is prepared to enter the glory of heaven. Hence the sick ought to receive it while they have the use of their faculties, that they may receive it with greater fruit; for although this sacrament can be received only when there is great (at least probable) danger of death, (lib. 6, n. 714. dub. 4,) still it should not be deferred until the dying man is on the point of expiring. Hence the Roman Catechism says that the priest is guilty of a grievous sin, if he defers the Extreme Unction until there is no hope of life, and the sick man begins to lose the use of his senses.

The priest then should endeavour to persuade the sick, that the extreme unction will, as the Council of Trent has declared, restore bodily health, if it be conducive to the welfare of the soul. "Interdum sanitatem corporis consequitur ubi saluti animæ expedierit."—Sess. 14, cap. 2. But the sacrament does not restore health when the disease has gone so far that it cannot be cured by natural means. John Eroldus relates, that a certain deceased man had revealed to a person, that had he received extreme unction at an earlier stage of his illness, he would have recovered: but on account of having deferred it he

died, and was condemned to purgatory for a hundred years. Secondly, the extreme unction will take away the relics of sins, and consequently it will also, according to St. Thomas, take away occult mortal sins. —Lib. 6, n. 731. Hence the pastor should tell the sick man to excite sorrow for the sins committed by each sense, while the priest is anointing that sense, and to answer with the others who are present: *amen.* Thirdly, it will give special helps against temptations, in the last conflict with hell. Hence it is very probable that a person who would refuse to receive this sacrament, cannot be excused from grievous sin.—N. 101.

It will be useful, then, to give some instructions regarding the administration of this sacrament. First, the opinion of those who say that a sick man can be anointed with a single drop of holy oil, without any diffusion of the oil over the part anointed, is not practically probable, for that would not be a true unction.—N. 709. The anointing of the five senses is, according to the more common opinion, necessary for the sacrament. Hence a single unction, and in one of the senses only, cannot be permitted, except in time of pestilence, or in cases of imminent danger of death.

In such cases it would be better to anoint the head, only conditionally, and to use only one form, saying: "Per istam sanctam unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam, indulgeat tibi Deus quidquid deliquisti per sensus, nempe per visum, auditum, gustum, odoratum et tactum." Should the sick man survive, the five senses should be anointed (conditionally), and the usual prayers should be recited. It is not necessary for the sacrament to anoint the two organs of sense: it is even lawful to anoint only one eye, or one hand. &c., when there is danger of infection, or any other necessity; as, for example, when the sick man cannot be turned from one side to the other. The anointing of the loins is omitted in giving the extreme unction to females, and also to men *quando infirmus commode moveri non potest;* as the Roman Ritual prescribes. It is the common opinion, that

the anointing of the feet is not necessary for the sacrament: with regard to that, the custom of churches is to be followed. The order of the unctions is not essential; but it is a grievous sin not to observe it. The extreme unction may be given to children who have the use of reason, although they are not as yet prepared for the holy communion; but when it is doubtful whether a child has attained the use of reason, the sacrament may be given conditionally, but not to those who are entirely destitute of the use of reason.—n. 719, 720. Fifthly, when there is not danger of irreverence, it may be given to those who have lost the use of reason, or labour under madness, or delirium, if when they had the use of reason, they asked, or probably would have asked, for extreme unction, or if they have given signs of contrition, particularly if they have occasional lucid intervals. When the priest has reason to doubt whether a person had ever attained the use of reason, he may then give extreme unction conditionally.—Idem de ebriis, si in mortis periculo sint, nisi tamen constet eos in mortali culpa fuisse, cum sensus ipsi amiserint. To the impenitent, and to those who manifestly die in sin, and also to those who are excommunicated, this sacrament should be refused, as the Roman Ritual directs. To women in proximate danger of death from the pains of childbirth, it may be given. Sixthly, in cases of necessity, all the prayers, except the form of the sacrament, are omitted: if there is time, they shall be said afterwards. In such cases, the sacrament may be administered without lights, without a minister, and probably without stole and surplice. Seventhly, according to the Council of Trent, (Sess. 14, c. 3.) the extreme unction cannot be repeated in the same sickness, unless it is at least probable that the sick man has recovered from the illness, and has again fallen back into similar danger of death. Eighthly, the priest should be cautious in moving the sick in order to anoint the parts prescribed; but should he carefully turn him in the bed, and thus accidently cause death, he need not be afraid of having fallen into an irregularity: for, in such a case, an irregularity can be

contracted only *ex delicto* which a person who acts inculpably from a motive of charity, does not commit. Lastly, it is probable that a parish priest can keep the holy oil in his own house during the night, if he has probable reason to fear that otherwise he would not be in time to give the sacrament to a dying man.

SECTION V.

Instructions for the Agony and Death.

As soon as the last agony has commenced, the priest should avail himself of the arms of the church, to assist the dying man according to the best of his ability. First, he should frequently sprinkle the sick man with holy water, (particularly if he is assailed with diabolical apparitions,) saying: "Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici ejus." Secondly, he should frequently make the sign of the cross on the dying man, and bless him, saying: "Benedicat te Deus Pater qui te creavit; benedicat te Filius qui te redemit: benedicat te Spiritus Sanctus qui te sanctificavit." Thirdly, he should frequently make him kiss the crucifix, and an image of Mary. Fourthly, he should make him gain as many indulgences as possible, by the use of medals, scapulars, &c.; and he should be particularly careful to give the dying the benediction, *in articulo mortis*, to which Benedict XIV. annexed a plenary indulgence. Fifthly, the priest should, now and then, suggest to the dying, some sentiment of contrition, of resignation, of oblation of his pains, of confidence in the passion of Jesus Christ, and in the intercession of Mary, of desire of seeing God; but these sentiments should be suggested slowly, and with interruptions, that the dying may have time to reflect on what has been said, and to repose. Sixthly, the priest should make the dying frequently invoke (at least with the heart, if they are unable to speak,) the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, and should make them frequently repeat the prayer, *Maria mater gratiæ, &c.* Seventhly, during the agony, the priest should make those who are present, frequently say

the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, for the dying man. He would also do well to give a signal to the people, by a certain number of tolls of the bell, that a person is in the last agony, that they may pray for him: this might be useful even to those who are in health. And here I say, as a general rule, that when the dying man has lost his senses, it will be more useful to assist him by prayers than by words. Eighthly, when the dying man is near death, the priest, kneeling at the foot of the bed, should recite, in a low tone, the prayers of the Church—*Proficiscere, &c., Suscipe, &c.*, which are at the end of the ritual and breviary. Ninthly, he should be cautious in touching the nose, the hands or feet of the dying man, to try whether they are cold; for this (at least if frequently repeated) might disturb him. He must be also careful not to move the sick during the agony, for motion might cause his death. Tenthly, when the dying man is near his last passage, the priest should make him hold (at least for some time) the blessed candle lighted, as a sign of his wish to die in the faith. Eleventhly, if the dying man be in his senses, the priest will do well to give him absolution several times, after a short instruction, in order to render his justification the more secure, and to repair past confessions, if they had been null, or at least, to make him acquire an increase of grace, and to diminish the pains of purgatory. And if the dying man should fall into mortal sin, the priest ought not to speak to him in a manner calculated to excite terror, but should exhort him, (if he is tempted again,) to call on Jesus and Mary; should get him to make an act of sorrow, and absolve him immediately. If the sick man has lost his senses, and does not give any sign of repentance, or of asking absolution, it is not right to repeat it very often. For to give absolution conditionally, (as is the practice in such cases,) always requires a serious cause. Hence, in such cases, a notable time should elapse between one absolution and another. In this, the priest must be regulated by his knowledge of the conscience of the sick man; for example, if he has had a habit of bad thoughts, if he is dying in con-

sequence of a wound, if he has been subject to violent hatred, or to unchaste love, if his illness be very painful, and he has but little patience, the absolution may be given to him more frequently: in other cases it will be enough to give it every three or four hours; but more frequently if he is near death. The priest will do well to tell the sick man (while he has the use of his senses,) after he has lost his speech, to give some determinate external sign as often as he wishes for absolution, or as often as the priest wishes to give it to him; for example, to close his eyes, to incline his head, to raise the hand, and the like.

Lastly, when the sick man appears to have expired, the priest should take care not to say immediately that he is dead; much less should he close his eyes or mouth, or cover his face; for the sick man might not be dead, and his death might be thus accelerated. When it is certain that the soul has gone to eternity, the priest will tell those who are present to recommend the departed soul to God, and kneeling down he will say the prayer, *Subvenite*, &c., which he will find in the Ritual or Breviary.

When the sick man is about to expire.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. My Jesus, I recommend to you this soul, which you have purchased with your blood.

[Observe that when the dying man is near his last moment, the acts should be suggested without pausing, and in a louder voice.]

O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.

My God, assist me, permit me to go to love you for eternity.

My Jesus, my Love, I love you, I repent, &c.

Oh! that I had never offended you.

Mary, my Hope, assist me: pray to Jesus for me.

Through your passion, save me, O my Jesus: I love you.

Mary my Mother, assist me at this moment. St. Joseph, come to my aid. St. Michael, the archangel, defend me. My angel guardian, assist me. My holy

patron, N., [here mention the principal advocate of the dying man,] recommend me to Jesus Christ. All ye saints of heaven, pray to God for me.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Jesus and Mary, to you I give my heart and my soul.

SECTION VI.

IMMINENTIA MORTIS SIGNA.

Opus est ut sacerdos qui hoc charitatis opus exercet imminentia mortis signa sciat, ut ita ægroto jam expiranti melius auxiliari possit. Præcipua et universalia sunt tria: 1. Pulsus deficiens, intermittens et formicans. 2. Respiratio anxia. 3. Oculi excavati, et vitreatri, aut apertiores solito, vel minus lucidi, vel qui respiciunt objecta diverse quam aliis apparent, ut cum palpebra superior relaxatur, et inferiorem prætergreditur.

Sunt etiam proxima mortis signa nasus acuminatus, et in extremitate albescens, et si nares ad instar follis sufflant; manus trementes, ungues lividæ; facies flavescens, livida et mutata; flatus male olens et frigidus; corpus immobile, sudo frontis et frigidus; calor in cordis parte nimius; festucas aut lanugines colligere; frigiditas in extremis omnibus partibus.

Signa tamen proximiora expirationi sunt respiratio intermittens aut languida; defectio pulsus, dentium contractio, stridor; distillatio in gena; lene quoddam suspirium, aut gemitus; lachryma per se fluens, oris, oculorum et totius corporis torsio.

Advertatur, 1. quod laborantes hydrope, hectica febri, vel vulnere, asthmate, pleuritide, sanguinis fluxu, vomitu, angina, et rheumatismo, interdum cum paucis nominatorum signorum, et cum pulsu valido ac loquentes expirare soleant. Advertatur 2. proximos morti esse, qui pleuritide laborant, dum respira, tionis difficultas, anhelitus augmentum et labia livida apparent. Vulnerati capite interdum subitaneo deliquio moriuntur. Hydropici, dum pulsus deficit, et anhelitus crescit, ac in ore spuma apparet. Qui fe-

bri intermittente laborant, mori solent in principio accessionis, dum convulsiones vehementes sunt. Advertatur 3. quod in aliquibus ægrotis flatus sit adeo debilis, et cordis exagitatio, ut jam mortui videantur, et tamen non sint. Signa certiora mortis sunt omnium partium frigiditas etiam in regione cordis, corporis gravitas, alicujus spiritus naribus admoti stimulum non sentire, speculum ori admotum non maculari, et similia. Demum advertatur, quod interdum signa superius in primo loco adducta fallant, et etiam sine illis repente moriatur infirmus; et ideo dum ægrotus in agone manet, sacerdos nunquam illum deserat.

SECTION VII.

Prayers and Acts preparatory to death, &c.

As soon as he enters the room of the sick man, the priest should say: *Pax huic domui. R. Et omnibus habitantibus in ea.*

He should then sprinkle the room with holy water, saying: *Asperges me Domine hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.*

He may then say the prayers that are in the ritual, preparatory to extreme unction.

Let him then take the crucifix, saying: *Ecce crucem Domini, fugite partes adversæ.* Let him give it to the sick man that he may kiss it, saying: *Kiss the feet of Jesus Christ, who has died on the cross for your salvation.*

The priest may then say to him: *Brother N., place yourself in the hands of God.* We hope that most holy Mary will obtain the restoration of your health; but your illness is very serious: unite your will to the will of God, that he may do with you what he pleases. Let us make the Christian acts preparatory to death, if the Lord has ordained for your good that you should die of this illness. Say, now, with me.

An Act of faith.—My God, the infallible truth, because you have revealed them to the holy church, I believe all the truths which the holy church proposes to my belief. I believe that you are my God, the

Creator of all things, who reward the just for eternity with the glory of heaven, and punish sinners for ever with the pains of hell. I believe the mystery of the most holy Trinity, that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, but only one God. I believe that the second persons, that is, the Son of God, became man in the womb of Mary, ever virgin, and that he died for us sinners, that he arose again from the dead, and that he now sits in heaven in glory equal to that of the Father, that he will thence come to judge all men. I believe in the seven sacraments, and particularly in baptism, penance, eucharist, and extreme unction. I believe that we shall all rise again in soul and body. Finally, I believe every other article which the holy Roman Catholic Church believes, which alone I believe to have the true faith.

An Act of Hope.

My God, trusting in your promises, because you are infinitely faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope through the merits of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of my sins, for the gift of final perseverance and for the glory of heaven.

An Act of Love, and of Sorrow.—My God, because you are infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love, I love you with my whole heart, above all things. And I repent of all my sins, and am sorry for them, with my whole soul, because by them I have offended you, who are infinite goodness. I purpose, with the assistance of your grace, which I ask for this moment, and for ever, never more to offend you; and I purpose to receive the holy sacraments.

Before giving the Benediction, *in articulo mortis*, the priest should exhort the dying man to offer himself to God, to submit patiently to whatever God ordains, and to accept death in satisfaction for his sins.

FINIS.

Printed by C. M. Warren, 21, Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin.

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